The Arts and Humanities at Austin Community College

The Big Read

Earth Day at Carnival ah!

Imperfect Strangers

Globe Trotting

Trash Dance
to serving our students, some of whom come to us with fewer advantages than others. That is part of the mission of community colleges. But there is another kind of service, and I am struck by it even more than the direct service to students.

I am closing in on sixty, and I am beginning to feel that certain values that I entered academia in service of are waning. So I am striking out, I think, to try and make a difference in some way for the future.

In the Arts and Humanities Division, whether we are talking about The Big Read, Carnaval alti, the Gallaudet Center, our travel abroad classes, our dance projects, our religion program or our faculty who work with veterans, we are all dedicated to serving our students, some of whom come to us with fewer advantages than others. That is part of the mission of community colleges. But there is another kind of service, and I am struck by it even more than the direct service to students.

I am closing in on sixty, and I am beginning to feel that certain values that I entered academia in service of are waning. So I want to highlight an old-fashioned set of ideals that I hold dear and I perceive still living in our faculty. In academia, we are servants of the humanities and the arts and the belief that these studies enrich and improve human beings. We are servants to the belief that language is one of the foundations of culture, that if we want to know each other we must learn each other's language. We are servants to the belief that in a democracy we can all learn from each other. We believe that critical thinking and creative thinking are not mutually exclusive. And we believe that great education occurs when a talented set of teachers are encouraged to define their own goals and supported to fulfill those goals.

When I look at the accomplishments of the faculty in this division, as seen in this publication, and I recognize how these accomplishments serve the students and the community, I know we are on the right track. As Dylan says, "You gotta serve somebody," and I am pleased to be able to serve the ideals of the Arts and Humanities, and to serve the faculty and students in this division.

Lyman Grant is Dean of the Arts and Humanities Division.

Second-Year Success for The Big Read

ACC's Arts and Humanities Division, with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, hosted The Big Read in 2010 for the second time. The Big Read included over 100 events in schools, libraries and jails to promote the reading of In the Time of the Butterflies by Julia Alvarez. The novel focuses on the struggles of the Mirabal sisters in the underground resisting the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic, leading up to their murders at the hands of the regime in 1960.

A highlight was a visit by Alvarez, who brought a packed house to the Mexican-American Cultural Center. "Alvarez was able to connect readers with activism and the way that reading can bring down the walls of being afraid of the other," said Charlotte Gullick, Creative Writing Department chair and program manager.

The Big Read encourages reading especially among lapsed and reluctant readers, said Gullick. The theme for 2010's project was "Silent Heroes," she said.

Thus the eight-week program began with the premiere of The Economy Furniture Strike, a documentary about early expressions of Chicano political aspirations in Central Texas. Held at the Mexican-American Cultural Center, the premiere drew a standing-room-only crowd including a who's who of area Hispanic leaders. The film was produced with support from ACC's Center for Public Policy and Political Studies.

A Veteran's Day reading at Riverside Campus featured National Book Award winner Larry Heinemann along with students from a Creative Writing class focused on veteran's experiences. In recognition, City of Austin Mayor Lee Leffingwell proclaimed the day "ACC's Big Read Veteran's Day in Austin, Texas."

An opening on campus of an exhibit of Caribbean paintings coincided with the performance of Ti-Jean and his Brothers by Nobel prize-winning poet Derek Walcott. The program culminated with a performance of The Justice Project, a collaboration of dancers and writers which explored and expressed ideas of personal and social justice in the languages of literature and of movement (see page 18).

The Arts and Humanities Division's partners in The Big Read included the Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders, Austin Independent School District, Austin Public Library, Del Valle Independent School District, Del Valle jails, the Mexican-American Cultural Center, Pro Arts Collective, Theater Action Project, Las Comadres, Alianza Cultural Latinoamericana, and ACC's Center for Public Policy along with our Drama, Dance and Creative Writing departments.

Gullick said the Big Read encourages creative partnerships and innovative programming. "We’re very excited about the fact that the programming we created last year got us the grant again this year.”

Stories of Life, Love and Revolution

by Christopher Smith Gonzales

In the Time of the Butterflies by Julia Alvarez is a novel you don't read — you hear it. You open the cover and let the voices speak, one after another. The four Mirabal sisters tell their stories. The sisters take turns to sometimes shout and other times chat or whisper or pray about their lives. Alvarez weaves together the story of the Mirabal sisters and their life in the Dominican Republic under the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo. As is to be expected in a novel about a dictator and a revolution, there is talk of politics, torture, guns, and death, but there is also a lot of talk of family and relationships and babies. What is truly interesting about the novel is that Alvarez allows the reader to see that revolutions are not just won in the streets but in the homes and on the farm.

Christopher Smith Gonzales is the editorial intern for Creation.
Hope and I drop my husband, Dreux, off at his school in the Mission District of San Francisco. My three-year-old daughter and I have eight hours to pass until he is done with the Sunday session of his graduate program. I'm supposed to meet my brother Tony at twelve-thirty in the East Bay. Hope and I are both hungry, so I drive deeper into the heart of the Mission to grab some food. Hope and I sit at a table, and I wonder what we will do until we meet my brother, and then what we will all do together. Five o'clock, when I need to pick up Dreux, seems far away. Hope starts to jump in the booth. The couple two tables away look like they were up late last night. I try to get Hope to eat some eggs, but she just wants apple juice. The waitress surprises me by wishing me a Happy Mother's Day. Dreux gave me a card earlier, and I was touched. But, that moment had passed, and the words from the waitress reminded me that this day is about what I'm trying to do for Hope. I grew up as a Jehovah's Witness, and we didn't celebrate any holidays. To put it mildly, I'm a little weird about all of them. I feel a silent pressure, telling me that I'm not feeling what I'm trying to do for Hope.
One time, my parents and my two brothers and I went on a trip to town. On the way back, three-year-old Tony rolled and wrestled with himself in the back of our Ford Bronco. He threw himself on the floor and kicked his legs up into the air. I was almost seventeen (Mom was six months pregnant when she was my age). I felt a strong urge to hold him. I took him in my arms and soothed his hair. He was asleep in five minutes. I held him the rest of the way home, and just as we took the off-ramp to our house, Mom turned. “The mother in you knew what to do.”

There’s a universal parent available to us all—the icon of what we can be for ourselves and for each other.

Back in the car, I maneuver through the downtown streets to get to the Bay Bridge. Hope sings and dances in her car seat. Her happiness spills over, and I dance with her while I drive. Despite all the times I don’t know how to be a parent, all the times I fail to be the person I want to be, Hope gives me the opportunity, every day, to try and get it right.

Charlotte Gullick is Chair of the Creative Writing Department.
Carnival ah!

ACC’s Arts and Humanities Division brought the arts out of the classrooms and on to the front lawn of the Rio Grande Campus for students and the community to appreciate.

The second annual Carnival ah! was a week-long event with a three-day outdoor carnival which included dance, theater, music, film, literary readings, craft discussions, an art sale, and an earth day shrine.

“When we have a huge event like Carnival ah! students can see that there is something really going on here,” said Carnival ah! project manager Arthur Adair. This year’s carnival featured many ACC classes and campus projects and because of that, students were not merely spectators but instead “got to partake and perform,” said Adair.

Adair explained that the goal of Carnival ah! was to “initiate collaboration between faculty and students across the whole Arts and Humanities Division—to get actors to meet dancers, to meet writers and to meet musicians, and then to hopefully create work outside of the classroom on their own.”

Carnival ah! kicked off with “B-Sides from the A-List: 6 Short Plays from the Theatre of the Absurd” which ran from April 16 to the 18. The outdoor carnival included an art sale, multiple dance performances and a film festival which featured mostly ACC student and faculty films. The week wrapped up with the fourth theatrical presentation of “In 2 the West,” a series of student written and performed monologues.

The dean of Arts and Humanities, Lyman Grant, felt this year’s Carnival ah! was fantastic because it’s becoming “more student and faculty oriented.”

Grant said the goal of Carnival ah! was to celebrate the arts, but what really drives the carnival is that “students at ACC get to see other students participate.”

Grant said that in the long run he hopes Carnival ah! will grow to something bigger than just one campus at ACC.

“The goal in the 5-year plan is to be a community arts festival,” said Grant.

Earth Day Installation and Shrine
by Melinda Rothouse

During the Spring 2010 Carnival ah!, ACC students, faculty, and staff collaborated to create an Earth Day installation and shrine on the grounds of the Rio Grande-campus, designed to raise awareness about the environment, recycling, and the religious, political, and cultural context of Earth Day. In an early Carnival ah! planning meeting my colleague in the religion program, Grant Potts, suggested the idea of creating an altar or shrine in conjunction with Earth Day and with the carnival themes of Process, Protest, and Progress. I loved the idea of having students create an outdoor installation that would highlight these themes, and that could grow organically during the carnival as passersby added their own contributions to the shrine.

Early in the spring semester, I put out a call for participation to the ACC community, and a number of students from the philosophy and religion program submitted ideas for the project, as well as ACC staff member Margot Rochon from the Foreign Languages department. After a couple of planning meetings, Margot and the students had decided on three main components for the installation: a Tree of Life shrine, a chalk drawing of the earth highlighting significant environmental, religious, and cultural sites, and a timeline of the earth’s geologic, biologic, cultural, and environmental history.

Claire Ford, a student in my History of Western Religious class, took the lead in planning the Tree of Life shrine. In a paper detailing her inspiration for the project, she writes:

The idea was simple: using only found and recyclable objects, create a form of a tree. Invite participants to add an object that holds some meaning to them, whether it’s a newspaper leaf, a photograph of a family member, a piece of sheet music, or a feather, allow every person involved to make the shrine their own in some small way. As each individual piece is added, the tree will come to life and “grow” just as a real tree would. The idea fulfilled all basic requirements including being participatory friendly, having the air of a religious shrine, and relating to Earth Day.

The Tree of Life seemed a particularly relevant symbol on many levels, as it both evokes environmental themes and plays a major role in many religious traditions, including Norse and Egyptian mythology, Jewish mysticism, Hinduism, and others. It signifies the interconnectedness of all life, symbolically linking heaven, earth, and the cosmos, and represents wisdom and enlightenment. Our Tree of Life grew from a giant cardboard box forming the trunk, along with recycled cans and bottles, newspaper and magazine clippings, ferns and flowers donated by local businesses, and various arts and crafts supplies, into an organic “organism” on which anyone could add his or her mark by adding a leaf, flower, note, or image.

Margot Rochon, administrative assistant for the Foreign Languages Department, suggested that we create a chalk drawing of the earth featuring the languages and cultures represented in her department, as well as a geologic timeline of the earth. Students William Brands and Alyssa Robinson from my Introduction to Comparative Religion class suggested adding environmental markers that would draw attention to particularly affected areas like the Aral Sea, the Great Barrier Reef, and the giant garbage patch in the Pacific Gyre. We also included several important religious sites, including Jerusalem, Mt. Kili- manjaro, Chichen Itza, Stonehenge, the Temple of Hatshepsut, Bodh Gaya, Angkor Wat, and Mt. Fuji. The earth timeline came to life on the sidewalks of the Rio Grande campus as students put their artistic talents to work with colored chalk, providing images to accompany events like the formation of the earth, the dawn of photosynthesis, the Permian-Triassic Extinction, and the earliest dinosaurs. The timeline extended into to the present age, culminating with the question “What will the future be?”

As the carnival progressed, members of the ACC community added their own contributions to the installation, with additional chalk drawings and mementos for the tree of life, including a Langston Hughes quote: “Hold on to dreams, for if dreams die, life is but a broken winged bird that cannot fly.” Students also created and handed out flyers detailing ways that people could “go green,” and learn more about recycling and the environmental movement. On Earth Day itself (April 22nd), which coincided with the final day of Carnival ah!, we held a drum circle and discussion of the history and ongoing significance of Earth Day, during which students shared their research on the environmental movement and exchanged ideas about how to live in a more environmentally conscious way, from buying reusable grocery bags and bicycling to class to shopping at farmers’ markets and reducing water waste.

I’d like to extend a huge thank you to all of the many students who participated in the Earth Day installation, as well as to all of the ACC faculty and staff members who made this project possible!

Melinda Robhouse is an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Religion.
Photographs by Alyssa Robinson and Melinda Rothouse
Painting is the Wine of Life
by Eileen Pestorius

I never made it to Europe until I was in my late 30s. Of course, as a painter and professor, I treasure Europe’s rich inheritance of art, but I also fell in love with the sensual European lifestyle. For many years now, I’ve formed a pattern of visiting Europe in the so-called “shoulder” seasons, when the weather is pleasant and tourists few, and inviting a small group of painters to experience the sensual feast of France and Italy with me.

As soon as classes ended at ACC last May, our group flew to Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris and hopped on the TGV for the two-and-a-half hour, 200 mile-per-hour ride to Avignon. The medieval popes who fled Rome were on to something—they lived very well on the wooded banks of the Rhone. The palaces of the popes and grand homes of the cardinals in the ancient walled city, and the thousand-year-old churches with their thick stone walls and small arched windows in the small towns near-by inspire artists today as they have for centuries.

The small size of our group—never more than five or six—made it possible for us to travel by rented van. We drove west and stayed in an old stone mill house overlooking the Gardon River in the foothills of the Cevennes. From here it was easy to visit pretty St. Jean du Gard, or Uzes, a medieval town with a busy market day. In nearby Nimes (birthplace of denim, or cloth de Nimes), the Pont du Gard, built as an aqueduct by the Romans, no longer delivers fresh water to Nimes, but it’s monumental architecture has stood two thousand years. Napoleon’s soldiers carved graffiti into the carefully shaped stones and modern kayakers pass below, while serious men playing boules are oblivious to all but their game. Wherever we go, we are careful never to neglect to sample the local foods and wines.

One day we toured the unique studio of the late David Chapman, a British Royal Academy member. His home is an old railway station. Another day we drove into the “French Grand Canyon” to paint in Florac, a beautiful mountain village on a clear rushing river. Violet irises bloomed everywhere, and red poppies colored the fields, bobbing their heads amid vineyards, olive groves, and terra cotta roofs.

Traveling on to Tuscany, we took in hilltop views of San Gimignano and Siena. Our lodging, besides the large solar-heated pool, maintains beautiful gardens that go back to the 1650’s. The fruit trees are laden with cherries, figs, or mulberries, depending on the season.

On a recent trip, we discovered the people of Castellina in Chianti were celebrating the feast of their patron, St. Fausto, who normally resides in a glass coffin in the church. We joined an outdoor, starlight feast served on long tables snaking through the narrow stone center of the hilltop town. Local vintners poured an endless flow of wine, and the local priest, butcher, and grocer were among hundreds serving hot lentil soup with pheasant, steaming mushroom risotto, fresh vegetables, and finally flaky Napoleon pastries crowned with fresh sweet figs. Seconds, anyone? Cheery waiters, with towels hanging over their forearms, were eager to offer more. Glassware gleamed on white tablecloths and for hours the clink of silverware and buzz of muted conversation and laughter echoed against ancient stone walls. Religious processions wound through the streets, and the carabinieri from Florence brought their band to add an official oompf to the local band’s performance on the church steps. We were so lucky to be part of this special event, which only occurs every five years.

My French and Italian are pretty poor, but I speak and read well enough to get by. I often discover events via posters or conversation with locals. Serendipity is the order of the day. One year we visited a fourteenth century winery which includes a sixteenth-century hilltop chapel and a modern factory with an ecologically-friendly grass roof. Another time, because the only local café was closed, we were invited to lunch in a grand palazzo. Another day we were served a three-course meal by a humble vine worker in his girlfriend’s bare apartment; they refused all talk of payment, but we returned with gifts.

The food and wine, the history, the art, the natural beauty and the charming hospitality of Italy and France are always inspiring. The painters and I always return with a renewed sense of the possibilities of life and art.

Eileen Pestorius is Adjunct Associate Professor of Art.
While working on my Ph.D. in Theatre Arts at Florida State University, I lived in London—and I fell in love with the city, undoubtedly the global center for theatre. I have returned many times to attend plays and visit museums and art galleries, and over the years I have developed many friends and professional contacts in the theatre community.

Last summer, from June 15-July 1, I was privileged to take a group of students to England to study Introduction to Theatre—the first study abroad course offered in the Drama Department. We saw eight plays in as many different theatres, where we were welcomed behind the scenes and into the professional lives of working artists. The students saw the best of London on stage and backstage.

We began with an overview of London on the Big Bus Tour, starting with the Changing of the Guard walk to Buckingham Palace. We visited the Tower of London and took a boat ride along the Thames River, where we had great views of the London Eye, the National Theatre, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, and the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben. We ended the day with a guided walking tour of ghostly places and buildings, including Lincoln's Inn Fields, a lovely park, but at one time the site of London's most gruesome executions.

For their first visit to a London theatre, I took the students on a backstage tour of the National Theatre, which houses the large Olivier Theatre, modeled after an ancient Greek amphitheatre, and seating 890; and the small, black box style Cottlesloe Theatre, a flexible space which can seat up to 400. Onstage at the Cottlesloe we had close-up views of the set for the play being introduced issues of race, class, and friendship that resonated with the students. Our fifth day in London we were given a private tour of the Greek Galleries at the British Museum, ending with the Parthenon Marbles and the Rosetta Stone. In the afternoon we visited the British Museum's Africa Galleries, where we viewed the beautiful and impressive masks, dance costumes, textiles, and hats. The textiles and hats in particular were similar to those designed for the production of Welcome to thebes that we attended at the National Theatre.

The next morning we went to the Lyttleton for our private tour of the Theatre Workshop. Alison Bomber, Assistant Head of the Voice Department of the RSC, led the group through a series of practical exercises that the actors in the company experience as they discover how to use their vocal and physical instruments in performance. She also allowed the students to walk onto the lighting grid. She also allowed the students to walk onto the thrust-style stage, and took them backstage to see the scene dock and prop tables as they were set up for Sir Thomas Mallory's Morte d'Arthur. That evening we saw Poulton's adaptation of Sir Thomas Mallory's Morte d'Arthur performed in the RSC's Courtyard Theatre. The performance was an epic spectacle lasting almost four hours, with a cast of more than 50 actors, elaborate costumes, evocative lighting, special effects, and acrobatics.

The next afternoon, the students were given a private work shop by members of the Handspring Puppet Company of South Africa. The movement story is told with beautiful lighting and scenic effects and period music. The late performance we saw was an original comedy piece called Sucker Punch conceived and performed by Footbarn, the famous English improvisational company. A part of the Barbican International Theatre Events festival, the performance took place in a circus tent in Victoria Park. Before the evening performance, we were taken on a private tour of the Barbican Arts Centre, where we learned about the architecture of the Barbican, inspected a portion of the Roman wall remains, and visited a reconstructed Gothic church on the site.

Our final gallery visit was to the National Portrait Gallery, where we saw a portrait of William Shakespeare, along with several portraits of Elizabeth I. The students recognized the kings, queens, authors, actors, and playwrights from their English and Drama studies. Other important portraits included the famous English actors Edmund Kean and William Kemble, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, authors Mary Shelley, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Jane Austen, the Bronte Sisters, and Alfred, Lord Tennyson's Siegfried. The next morning we took a two-hour train ride through the English countryside to Stratford-upon-Avon, the birthplace of William Shakespeare. That night we saw the first of two plays performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company, a modern dress production of Antony and Cleopatra.

The next afternoon, the students were given a private work shop by Professor Stanley Wells, director of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, and that evening saw a brilliant production of Macbeth in the Globe.

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Tennyson, as well as contemporaries such as the Beatles, the actors Fiona Shaw and Pete Postlethwaite, Queen Elizabeth, Prince Charles, Princess Diana, and Princes William and Harry. For me, the study program in London was an opportunity to share with my students the city and its theatres, which have had significant influence on English and American dramatic works and productions and on my own life and studies. I want to thank Shelby Brammer, Drama Department Chair, and Lyman Grant, Dean of Arts and Humanities, for their support.

Cassandra Knobloch is Professor of Speech and Drama, and Assistant Dean of Communications. For information on the ACC International Studies program, call 223-7114 or 223-7680, or go to austincc.edu/intstudy.
Creating a Catalog for Faculty and Staff by Janet Brooks

In 2008, I began participating in a series of seminars offered by Landmark Education. One seminar in particular, the Self-Expression and Leadership Program, provided the impetus for me to put into action an idea that I’ve had for some time—the creation of a printed catalog that features artwork from our large, diverse, and dynamic Art Department faculty and staff. How exciting to be able to publish the results of the creative outlook and energy we have to offer our students and our community. I want to acknowledge both the Austin and global Landmark Education communities for the inspiration and support they provide for me.

I have a background in book design, so putting something like this together is a gift I can offer the ACC Art Department. I asked faculty and staff to submit several images of their work along with a statement of some kind. The format includes a two-page spread for each participant, we now have a 92-page book! This will be posted on the department website and will be available in print.

I want to thank the ACC Art Department faculty and staff for their participation in the catalog. I have enjoyed the opportunity to talk with those who have participated and assisted in this project. The encouragement of my colleagues, and of the Department Chair Gary Weinberg, Art Department Assistant Chair Roberta Weston, and Arts and Humanities Dean Lyman Grant, have been a great support for me in the long process of putting this together.

Janet Brooks is a Professor of Art.

New Award: Balcones Fiction Prize

The Creative Writing Department and the Balcones Center for Creative Writing have announced the creation of a major new fiction prize.

Due to the success of the Balcones Poetry Prize, now in its 15th year, it has become feasible to move forward a project that has been talked about among Creative Writing faculty for several years—the creation of the Balcones Fiction Prize. The new prize will award $1,500 for an outstanding book of literary fiction published during 2010. At the same time, the Balcones Poetry Prize has been increased from $1,000 to $1,500.

Adjunct Professor Irwin Tang was selected to direct the fiction prize, with the support of the Department Chair and contact Professor Tang at irwin@ austintx.edu or 512-852-9039.

For information on the poetry prize, contact John Herndon at herndon@austintx.edu or 512-828-9206.

ACC Hosts Gallaudet University Regional Center by Drew Thomas

The nation’s premiere institution of higher education for the deaf is coming to Austin Community College. Gallaudet University serves approximately 2,000 students on its home campus in Washington, D.C. but reaches thousands more through regional centers across the country. Now ACC has been selected to serve as the host institution for the Southwest Gallaudet University Regional Center (SW-GURC).

In 1864, Congress authorized the school to grant college degrees in a bill signed into law by Abraham Lincoln. Thus Kendall’s Columbia Institution became the world’s first school for the advanced education of the deaf. In 1954, the Columbia Institution was renamed Gallaudet University in honor of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, a venerable pioneer in the field of deaf education.

Today, Gallaudet University boasts nearly two thousand under- and postgraduate students, three hundred faculty members, and a catalogue of more than forty majors leading to Bachelor’s, Master’s, and Doctoral degrees. Gallaudet alumni number around 18,000, with 53 chapters of the university’s Alumni Association worldwide. The sum of those served by Gallaudet’s workshops, conferences, and enrichment programs is easily in the millions.

Gallaudet University is able to provide national outreach to so many deaf students through the establishment of “host institutions” across the U.S., each representing a region that includes several states. The Southwest region includes Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and Utah. The goal of the new SW-GURC is to advise applicants who are considering transferring to Gallaudet University, and to provide professional development for our faculty.

The most conspicuous result of this new partnership will occur in January, 2011, when Gallaudet University, the Texas School for the Deaf, and ACC’s Arts and Humanities Division sponsor the 2011 ASL Roundtable, an academic convergence of deaf educators from across the country. Don Miller, Professor of ASL-ESOL at ACC, will serve as Chair of next year’s Roundtable.

Miller, a former recruiter for Gallaudet, predicts that the SW-GURC will cultivate more and better ASL instructors in addition to fostering a straightforward accreditation program for those who would transfer from ACC to Gallaudet.

“The students feel very positive about having the GURC here,” said Miller. “They feel like they are taking Gallaudet classes right now, because a pipeline has been set for transfers, communications, etc. Once that happens, the number of students will increase.”

According to Singleton, “ACC has been proactive in developing an Articulation Agreement with Gallaudet, which means our students can take courses here that will transfer to Gallaudet and vice versa. This is a real plus for both deaf and hearing students looking to start at ACC and transfer to Gallaudet.”

The SW-GURC will also provide new job opportunities for deaf students versed in ASL and interpretation.

Domatti said her students “are proud of the college for being chosen. For those who wish to pursue a four-year degree from Gallaudet University, the GURC will provide them with the support they need to ‘start here and get there.’”

For more information about the SW-GURC at ACC, or the 2011 ASL Roundtable, please visit www.austintx.edu/swgurc or email Don Miller at ast Miller at ash@gmail.com.

Duet by Janet Brooks
From Trash to Treasure

In the summer of 2009, Allison Orr’s Forklift Danceworks staged The Trash Project just as rains arrived to break the drought. The project, a collaboration with the City of Austin Solid Waste Services Department, featured 24 Solid Waste Services employees and 16 large sanitation vehicles performing on the runway of the old Mueller Airport. Some 2,000 people turned out to see the performance that was cited for several awards—the Austin Critics Table’s Most Outstanding Dance Show, the Austin American-Statesman’s Number One Arts Event, and the Austin Chronicle’s Number One Dance Event of 2009. Solid Waste Services Supervisor Don Anderson received a special citation for his breathtaking duet with the crane.

As we witness briefly through those long afternoons as every Monday through Friday as Buffalo Bill Cody as Barnum and Bailey is as grand as any finale dust bins drumming trash trucks circling The closing promenade of necessary beauty another instant as Barnum and Bailey as Buffalo Bill Cody is as grand as any finale as every Monday through Friday through those long afternoons as we witness briefly atop this wave of applause another instant of necessary beauty

With gratitude to Allison Orr, WCW, and the City of Austin’s Solid Waste Services Department

Joe Hoppe is an Assistant Professor of English.

Trash Dance
by Joe Hoppe

Among the rain and lights
I saw the figure eight of City of Austin Garbage trucks dancing across the abandoned airport asphalt

Among the late summer rain after five months of drought and the mighty light of sunset sweeping behind the cloud-mountains of The West

And the lights of the trucks themselves yellow caution spanning rooftop lights red brake lights white white headlights the garbage trucks the automated grabber claw trucks the dumpster green dead animal truck they dance

In sinuous lines regimented rows lights reflected on the rain-slicked pavement on the safety yellow/green reflectorized vests of solid waste workers two-step tripping tipping big blue recycling bins

Hydraulic arms rise in halleluia claws circle containers bring them up full let them down empty let them drum

on the asphalt
let the MC Trashmaster’s words hip hop across the parking lot
Ballet baile bootyshaking spin your bins and allemande left
Break it down

For the man with the big scraper shovel and the big green truck that removes possums and raccoons kittens and pink-collared poodles he passes like a windshield shield seegee words like a prophet from air raid surplus speakers

Streetsweepers follow his revelations His lonesome cowboy secrets will not be left seeping into the pavement so the tarmac is clean for a brand new scene

Where the spotlights shine on a swan crane solo five hundred people sit expectant as the driver exits his cab extends the braces with a pneumatic sigh and mounts the controls to turn and roll rise and twist piouetting his great articulated arm in the moist night air

It’s like a secret we share what crane operator has not danced his machine in solitary joy at the end of a grinding work day?

With gratitude to Allison Orr, WCW, and the City of Austin’s Solid Waste Services Department

Joe Hoppe is an Assistant Professor of English.

Dancers, Writers Team Up for Justice

Darla Johnson, Adjunct Professor of Dance, and Charlotte Gullick, Chair of the Creative Writing Department, brought their classes together in Fall 2010 to create a collaborative event for the Justice Project and the Big Read. The Justice Project was created by Johnson and Nicole Wesley, a dance professor at the University of Trinidad and Tobago. They have staged workshops and performances at the University of Northumbria in Newcastle, England, and Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. The Big Read is an effort to promote reading of literature sponsored by ACC’s Arts and Humanities Division and the National Endowment for the Arts (see page 3). Johnson and Wesley are strongly rooted in their diverse communities where they have created work, separately and together, exploring issues of race/racism, body image, gender, culture and maturation. The Justice Project celebrates the authentic artistic voice and embraces the transformation that arises at the intersection of self and community.

The collaboration involved Johnson’s dance-choreography students and Gullick’s students, who were studying memoir writing, working together to explore their own ideas and experiences of justice and injustice, and to express these through the media of movement and language. Wesley’s students in Trinidad, including a steel pan player and two dancers, worked in the same direction on their end, and the groups communicated via the internet.

Wesley and the students from Trinidad arrived in time for a week’s worth of rehearsals before staging three performances as part of the Dance Department’s Choreographer’s Showcase in December.

Allison Orr is an Adjunct Professor of Dance.

From Trash to Treasure

In the summer of 2009, Allison Orr’s Forklift Danceworks staged The Trash Project just as rains arrived to break the drought. The project, a collaboration with the City of Austin Solid Waste Services Department, featured 24 Solid Waste Services employees and 16 large sanitation vehicles performing on the runway of the old Mueller Airport. Some 2,000 people turned out to see the performance that was cited for several awards—the Austin Critics Table’s Most Outstanding Dance Show, the Austin American-Statesman’s Number One Arts Event, and the Austin Chronicle’s Number One Dance Event of 2009. Solid Waste Services Supervisor Don Anderson received a special citation for his breathtaking duet with the crane.

As we witness briefly through those long afternoons as every Monday through Friday as Buffalo Bill Cody as Barnum and Bailey is as grand as any finale dust bins drumming trash trucks circling The closing promenade of necessary beauty another instant as Barnum and Bailey as Buffalo Bill Cody is as grand as any finale as every Monday through Friday through those long afternoons as we witness briefly atop this wave of applause another instant of necessary beauty

With gratitude to Allison Orr, WCW, and the City of Austin’s Solid Waste Services Department

Joe Hoppe is an Assistant Professor of English.

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Spring 2011

Steve Kramer Retrospective
February 1–March 10th
Rio Grande Campus Gallery, Bldg. 5000
Reception to be announced, check austincc.edu/ah

Social Contract Theory Film Screening and Lecture
February 5–7, 7–9 p.m.
Eastview Campus, Room #5000
Sponsored by the ACC Austin Philosophy Forum

“Manifest the Whale, the Teacup Destiny”
February 8–9, 8 p.m.
Rio Grande Campus, Mainstage Theatre
An interdisciplinary theatrical installation by Arthur Adair, inspired by Lydia Gibson’s short story, The Teacup Whale, Shakespeare’s Timon of Athens, and the concept of Manifest Destiny.

Carnival ah!
April 12–13
Rio Grande Campus
A public festival of academic and artistic offerings of live music, dance, drama and performance art, as well as a student art sale, literary readings, philosophy and humanities discussions, open mic sessions, and film festival. Sponsored by the Arts and Humanities Division. Visit austincc.edu/carnival for information about these events.

Camille Dungy Reading
April 13, 7 p.m.
Rio Grande Campus, Gallery Theater

“Small Works of Great Art” Fundraiser for the Steve Kramer Art Scholarship Fund
April 25–June 3
Rio Grande Campus Gallery, Bldg. 5000
Reception, April 29, 6–8 p.m.

In 2 the West
April 28–30, 8 p.m.
Rio Grande Campus, Gallery Theater
Co-produced by the Creative Writing and Drama Departments. Directed by Amparo Garcia and Sidney Brammer.

The Rio Review Publication Celebration
May 4, 6–8 p.m.
Rio Grande Campus, Gallery Theater
ACC’s literary journal features student work such as poems, prose, screenplays, and artwork. Sponsored by the Creative Writing Department.

Spring Choreographers’ Showcase
May 6–7, 8 p.m.
Rio Grande Campus, Mainstage Theater

Spring Dance Informance
May 12, 7 p.m.
Rio Grande Campus Dance Studio, Room 150

Summer 2011

Studio Informance
June 28, 7 p.m.
Rio Grande Campus, Dance Studio, Room 130

Site-specific Performance
June 29, 8 p.m.
Site to be announced

Ongoing

Student Literary Gatherings
January 31, February 28, March 28, April 25, 7 p.m.
Austin Java, 1206 Parkway
The ACC Creative Writing Department sponsors monthly Student Literary Gatherings open to all students and the public. Visit austincc.edu/crw for information about these events.

Galleris and Displays of Student and Faculty Work
Galleries and displays can be seen at the following locations:
- Cypress Creek Commons, Highland Business Center
- Main building hallways, Gallery in the Cave
- Student lounges, learning centers
- Building 3000 Gallery

Schedule subject to change, please consult austincc.edu/ah
The Jewish Private’s Tale
by Mary Leche

Bagram Airbase, Afghanistan. I’m the only Jew out here, least I can find. I grew up in Beverly Hills. That’s 90210. First job was in a frozen yogurt store called Cultured Class in West Hollywood. Made us all wear tight pink T-shirts while we pumped out nonfat flavors like “Jamaican Me Crazy!” to gay men and women in “Boys Town.” What I can’t stand is gay bashers. I don’t always fit in with the Army if you get what I mean. I mean my first memory is a pony ride in front of the Beverly Hills Center in West Hollywood. In Fourth grade I signed Gabriella Quintella’s yearbook “Have a great fucking summer.” Three hours later my principal was holding a Xerox copy. In Sixth grade I was suspended for pulling down the American flag. Go figure. Had a party at the house when I was seventeen and my parents away somewhere. Only rule, and I made it: no one allowed inside. So all I might have to do later would be pick up the cigarette butts and pearl dive for a Tequila bottle at the bottom of the pool and I would be in the clear. Little did I know that Lily Ghafourni was drinking for the first time ever, would get so drunk she would need a piece of toast or die. I gave the house keys to a friend to let her and my good buddy Taylor inside. Rest’s history. Parents evicted me from my own house. Funny thing about being rich. I was only as rich as my parents made me. Only thing of use my father told me was the easiest way to clean my fingernails is to rub them against my scalp like this when I have shampoo in my hair, that the key to racquetball is to hit the shots low. Grew up in a mansion, went to Berkeley. All that sin. Dante, he painted an awesome picture of Hell. Joined the Army on a fluke, day after my 21st birthday. Next month it’s back to my hometown to prove that “the Army’s made a man out of me.” Existentialist in the Army. Ha! 1360 on the SAT Junior year. M-16 in the hand. Never would have met any of these guys in my other life. Still, wish I’d joined the reserves. “Klingman,” some guy will say, “what the Army give you anyway, man?” “You,” I tell them. “You.” And that’s the truth.

Riding in a Humvee, the Sergeant Says
by Mary Leche

Bosnia-Herzegovina. M’am, I ain’t kidding when I say that something like four-hundred men was cleaned out of the dirt at a farm right up the hill. Bodies put in bags, stripped naked when they get over there in that low blue and white building, we just now passing on the right. Laid them out on tables something like an assembly line. What I hear is that the UN pays a couple women good bucks for washing the clothes in outdoor pots, stirring with cut off branches of trees. I can’t help thinking it’s sort of like a soup made out of shirts, pants, whatever. Couldn’t get me near it, but they do a job I guess. Imagine all them clothes hanging in a room like a second hand store. Once lady found a brother by her own sewing on the inside cuffs of pants. In a war, the way it is, people leave home in a hurry. What they got is what they got. Maybe they take themselves some thread, a needle to fix things up. Even made underwear out of parachutes from food drops. Layers of duct tape across the bottoms of socks worked like shoes till it rained or snowed, which case the person’s excuse me for saying it, shit out of luck. Like my father always said, boy, he said, do what you have to. M’am I got a CD player here under the dash, sort of a jackleg job but it works. Could either put on Reba or Loretta. Your choice.

Mary Leche teaches special classes of English Composition I and Creative Writing for veterans.
Cover Artwork
Winter's Day by Janet Brooks

Ovation is a publication of the Arts and Humanities Division at Austin Community College. Our offices are located at 306 West 13th Street at the Peach Street Office Building, Office 2-I. Call us at 512-223-3352. Or visit www.austincc.edu/ah John Herndon, editor, can be contacted at 512-828-9368 or at jherndon@austincc.edu.

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