



From Tunis, to Egypt, to Lebanon to Yemen  
the light from a burning man proved catching  
And those with nothing to lose, or offer, but bodies  
fanned the embers of their hopes into a blazing dream.

—Contemporary Egyptian Poet, Yahia Lababidi

## A WARM WELCOME TO OUR EXCHANGE STUDENTS

This semester, the English Department is pleased to have four exchange students join us. They are (pictured clockwise from top left): Samantha Hayden-Waite, (University of Dundee, Scotland—Education, concentration in English and History); Stephen O’Sullivan (University of Limerick, Ireland—Journalism and New Media); Cassandra Phillips, (Victoria University, Australia—Education, concentrations in English and History); and Seonaid Rogers, (University of Dundee—double major in English and History).



We discussed some of the similarities and differences between the students’ experiences here and at home, in school, and in daily life. One major difference is in course structure; in the U.K. and in Australia, classes are in two parts, lecture and tutorial. As Seonaid explains: “we have lectures in big lecture theatres, and supplement those with smaller, more informal tutorials where everyone gets a chance to participate in discussions. Lectures tend to be more about the professor outlining the week’s topics, and tutorials tend to be about background reading and discussion.” The students were (pleasantly?) surprised to see our “combined” classes.



Another difference some noted was the volume of work required and the emphasis placed on class attendance. There seem to be fewer assignments, overall, in overseas universities, and there is no penalty for being absent from a class. Of course, it *is* a great deal of work when one is taking American Lit. I *and* II, 17<sup>th</sup> C. British Lit., *and* 19<sup>th</sup> C. American Lit. all at the same time, as Samantha is doing.

Cassandra mentioned that many students in Australia choose universities close to home, and that schools do not have on-campus housing, save for international students. She pointed out that part of the reason for this is economics—it’s cheaper to be a commuter. She asked about U. S. parents saving money in “college funds,” something that is not common at home.

Food was a big topic—perhaps another article entirely. In short: portions here are larger, “American” cheeses are not so hot, but the waffles at Hasbrouck are amazing. Also, there is a great deal of interest in Milk Duds. The students told of adventures in New York City, and of their plans for Spring Break (Miami and Jamaica). Good luck to our four visiting students: have a great semester here!

## Get to Know Your Faculty: Amelia Rose

When I was in college, reading about Sylvia Plath's dilemma in *The Bell Jar* riveted me. As a young female student, Plath was depressed when she saw her life branching out before her "like the green fig tree ...from the tip of every branch, like a fat purple fig, a wonderful future beckoned me and winked." Her dilemma was that she felt unable to choose from the figs that beckoned her: career, travelling, marriage, writing, or maintaining a happy home with a husband and children because she couldn't make up her mind which one of the figs she would choose. I decided at that moment that, unlike Plath, I would try my best to harvest every fig I possibly could, and savor each one to the best of my ability.



Teaching is my career and my passion; I enjoy every minute of being in the classroom and implementing my devotion to applied knowledge. This approach emphasizes the kind of active learning that gets students thinking and applying knowledge to the kinds of problems, issues, and questions they will encounter in later life. This has been the core of my teaching philosophy since I began teaching in academia over 20 years ago, and since 2008 has become the basis for clarifying how the Core Curriculum is taught in Harvard, Yale, and many other universities.

Marriage, family, and my home are my contentment. My three children are the foundation and core of my existence, and my equilibrium. They kept me grounded even as I labored for my PhD while teaching at SUNY New Paltz as an adjunct. Many of my friends and colleagues wondered how I would manage the work at home, school, and SUNY. However, I cherished doing all three; those "figs" kept me nourished, and objective.

Learning is my avocation. I obtained a Certificate of Advanced Study from SUNY when my

children began attending school. I wanted to make sure that I was on the cutting edge of philosophical and pedagogical methodologies employed in schools, so I decided to learn as much as I could about education. That "fig" proved invaluable in my parent-teacher conferences! My interest in methodology combined with my passion for literature continued as part of my research for my doctoral dissertation. I have continued researching this area, and I will be presenting at the 2011 Annual Conference on the State of Higher Education in Washington, D.C., in June, on the significance of implementing applied learning in academia in light of the changing demographics of the student population in American colleges.

My devotion to exercise motivates me to enjoy running, skiing, biking, and hiking in this bucolic area. It also enabled me to invent an exercise machine called Airbounder™. I found that jumping during warm-ups injured my knees, so I went about inventing a machine that mimicked jumping for its medicinal benefits, but was done on a pliable base. This invention made it possible for me to take my family to many countries and to interact with many cultures that we would not have been able to otherwise visit. My family and I have been invited to speak in many areas of the United States and foreign countries, and I have become a spokesperson for rebounding and controlling obesity, especially among adolescents. In China, I spoke to the Chairman of the Communist Party, and my children and I explored remote areas of Asia where we were accompanied by United States Government officials, and introduced to lifestyles that are enigmatic to most of us.

I vowed to savor every fig, and I believe I have done so, fortunately, with impunity.

## Andrea Cohen Visits New Paltz

Last Thursday, the SUNY New Paltz English Department was proud to welcome renowned poet and author Andrea Cohen to our campus. The director of the Blacksmith House Poetry Series in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Cohen's poems and stories have appeared in numerous publications, among them *The Atlantic Monthly* and *The Hudson Review*. With a wonderfully dry wit and a plain style that places a heavy emphasis on rhythm, her poetry also contains a strong narrative element that reveals her experience with short stories.



After guiding a student writing workshop in the afternoon, she gave a reading in the evening that began with light-hearted poems of remembrance

like "Self-Mailer," a short piece which expresses a fond appreciation of the days before e-mail. The selections quickly moved from the nostalgic to the personal, such as tales of being the sole American working at a Sushi Restaurant in "Found in Translation."

The emphasis on sound in her works clues us in to her acute sense of language and keen observation. Her poems abound in descriptions of sirens, the breaking of glass, and the cracking of bones. Although she is a poet chiefly inspired by ideas, she feels like a musician when she writes. When reading her work aloud, she listens for the musical elements of the words, and can "hear when something sounds flat."

## The Tutoring Center is Here to Help

The Tutoring Center's purpose is to "supply academic support to every student on campus—undergraduate and graduate." Registered students are allowed one hour of tutoring per week for *each* class in which they are enrolled. In addition, they offer "Writing Assistance": half-hour appointments to help students with essays, papers, college application letters, resumes, or whatever other work they might need assistance with. Whether one simply wants a second set of eyes on his or her essay, has questions about MLA or APA formatting, or needs help with refining a thesis, Writer's Assistance is an invaluable resource. WA accepts walk-in students, but the Center strongly recommends calling ahead to make an appointment.

The tutoring center has roughly 75 tutors covering almost every subject, and they can help with potentially any class. The tutors are certainly qualified to assist students—in order to be considered for a tutoring position, a student must have a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA, and an "A" or "A-" in the classes they wish to tutor. Tutors also attend training sessions once a week,

offering them certification through the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA)—a credential that looks great on a c.v. or resume, and allows one to tutor privately. The Center is always looking for qualified students; last semester, they hired more tutors than ever before, and they are "on track to match that this year."

If you want to apply for tutoring or become a tutor, stop by the center. The Center is located in the South Classroom Building (SCB) 132. Direct questions to Landan Gross, Coordinator of Tutoring: SCB 130, email [grosslg@newpaltz.edu](mailto:grosslg@newpaltz.edu), or call (845) 257-2636. More information is available at [newpaltz.edu/tutoring\\_center](http://newpaltz.edu/tutoring_center).

Here are the Tutoring Center hours: Regular tutoring occurs weekly in one-hour appointments, Monday-Thursday 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Writing Assistance: Half-hour appointments, Monday to Thursday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Center suggests that students call ahead to make an appointment, but walk-ins are welcome. Students, regardless of level, will find the services useful, and we highly recommend getting in touch.



## Briefly Noted

Creative Writing Student Toni Odell is working with fellow New Paltz student KC Kirkpatrick to create a creative writing e-zine called “Otherwise Caffeinated.” The site will be launching March 1, and is open to all styles and genres as they aim to create a sense of literary openness. Visit **otherwisecaffeinated.com** or search “Otherwise Caffeinated” on Facebook for submission information.



The English Department is considering adding a Twitter Account to our repertoire of digital outreach. If you have an account and would like to be notified of events and important announcements, log on to our Facebook page and let us know.

Want to take care of an outstanding GE or survey course and keep your brain from atrophying after the semester is over? English summer course descriptions are online at **newpaltz.edu/summer**.

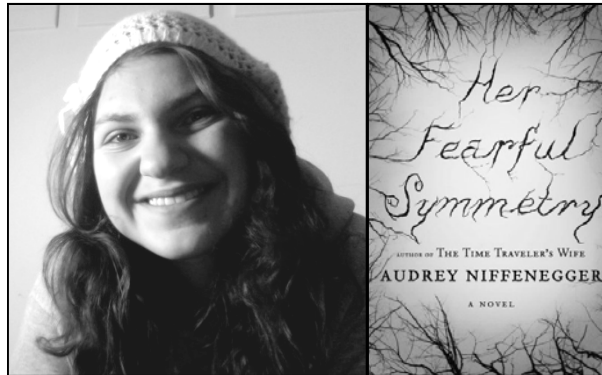


Sigma Tau Delta, the English Department honor society, recently sent out invitations by e-mail and U.S. mail. Liberal Arts English and English/Education majors meeting these three criteria are eligible to apply: a 3.75 overall GPA, a 3.75 GPA in courses for the English major, and at least half of the major completed. Contact Professor Thomas Olsen at **olsent@newpaltz.edu** if you believe you are eligible and did not receive an invitation. The deadline for applications is March 16.

## “What I’m Reading”: Rebecca Van Der Jagt

This issue’s “What I’m Reading” comes to us from undergraduate English Major and Sigma Tau Delta President (see above) Rebecca Van Der Jagt:

A few weeks ago I picked up *Her Fearful Symmetry* by Audrey Niffenegger because I read her debut novel, *The Time Traveller’s Wife*, in high school and loved it. The film adaptation of her debut novel was a major disappointment to me. I soon forgot what a great writer Niffenegger truly is.



*Her Fearful Symmetry* expands on the themes that are present in her debut novel and portrays relationships that transcend both time and space, forcing the reader to reconsider what life after death entails. While Niffenegger is oftentimes advertised as a romance writer, this is simply not the case. Her writing exhibits undeniable elements of human nature through pleasingly dynamic characters and argues that these elements live on with us after death.

### Footnotes

1. February 28: Deregistration for non-payment for spring semester.
2. March 4: Last day for student to submit work due for course graded “I” for fall 2010.
3. March 11: Mid-Point of semester.
4. March 18: Last day for instructor to submit grade change for an “I”(incomplete) for fall 2010.

**Works Cited** is published approximately four times per semester by the

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Next issue: April 4 • Submission deadline: March 18