



"A Member of the Texas A&M Systems"

NEWSLETTER

The Department of Literature & Languages

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Book Launch: A Man of Grace, a remembrance and recollection of Paul Wells Barrus



In 2010 make time for a Commerce visit this coming March. The beautiful new Alumni Center will be hosting a book launch for *"Man of Grace: A Remembrance and Recollection of Paul Wells Barrus."* There will be food, fun and friends to make and friendships to renew.

The Department of Literature and Languages, is poised to restart the annual Paul Wells Barrus Day which originally began in 1983 by Dr. Fred Tarpley, then chairman of the department, as a lecture and luncheon series presented annually by former Barrus students to honor their beloved teacher and to help raise awareness of the scholarship fund begun in Barrus' honor.

Dr. Paul Barrus, ETSU legend for more than the twenty-seven years he taught there, lived the span of the 20th century, minus two and one half years—through the administrations of two Roosevelt's and two Bushes, to say nothing of King Edward VII and Kaiser Wilhelm II. His life, however, was not one of grandeur, but one of service, humble though well documented by him and by many others who loved and valued him as teacher, counselor, and toward the end of his life, as an

effective and well-regarded Roman Catholic priest.

On January 1 of 2010, Dr. Barrus will have been deceased for one decade. It is time for a good book about a good man who became one of us, and by so doing, enriched us all. This book is for all those former students, friends, and colleagues who still remember this unique English professor with great affection, for the many parishioners that he served, for current Texas A&M-Commerce students who would like to have known him, and for all those who simply enjoy reading about interesting lives and times past.



This remembrance is written by one of his former students, Dr. Mary Cimarrilli, memoirist and 2003 PEN Award Finalist for *"The Bootlegger's Other Daughter"*, poet, playwright, and essayist.

As our plans develop for this special day, we will let you know more details.

For now, March is the magic word.

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Literature & Language Team "Sweeps" at Pathways Conference



Di Ferrante explaining her poster to one of the judges

Laredo was the setting for the 7th Annual Student Research Symposium of the Texas A&M System which took place on November 13-14, 2009. The Lit & Lang department sent quite a contingent of students, who performed admirably. Laura Di Ferrante won best poster in the humanities and third best in the overall category. The latter is a monetary prize. Mary K Croft won second place for her poster. Sergio Pizziconi and Sandra Shu-Chao Liu tied for second place in the oral presentations. The conference was also attended by: Sean Kennedy, Luca Morazzano, and Tonia Taherzadeh. Over one thousand students' posters and papers were presented at the conference. At the symposium, undergraduate and graduate students participate in poster and oral presentations and compete for cash prizes for best posters.

Story continued on page 2

Literature & Language Team "Sweeps" at Pathways Conference

Continued from page 1

We asked Di Ferrante what her reaction to winning was.

"The two prizes made me very happy," she replied. Di Ferrante said that going to the conference "was a great opportunity." She added that she started working on her poster with research based on a paper she wrote for a Pragmatic class in the Spring semester. "In Laredo I could share it with my peers who in turn shared theirs with me, everybody enjoyed this flow of ideas." said Di Ferrante. Like other participants, Di Ferrante defended her paper before two judges, faculty from other Universities.



Most of the Lit & Lang team seated at the reception. Left to right, Kennedy, Taherzadeh, Di Ferrante, Morazzano, Pizziconi.

"You grew up in two big Italian cities. What does the experience of attending TAMU in Commerce represent for you?"

"Commerce is, of course, a small town and the differences between living here and in Italy are significant



Mary K Croft next to her poster

and deep. However in Commerce I found something I have never experienced in Italy. Professors know me in person and look after my education. The Literatures and Language Department is a friendly environment; professors and students are always available to help. Besides, Gee Library gives us access to all its collection quickly and if you need a book they do not have, you can borrow one and have it in three days through interlibrary loan."

"What do you miss most from Italy?"

"Coffee and my parents."

To submit articles for this newsletter contact:

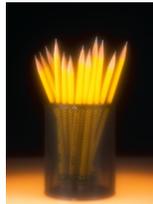
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Literature & Language Silver Leo Writing Club



The dynamic group now known as the Silver Leos Writing Club began as a graduate course in memoir writing taught by Dr. Fred Tarpley, in the Department of Literature and Languages during the spring semester of 2009. As part of the Silver Leo program

designed to attract senior citizens to the campus, the course enrolled thirty students.

"These remarkable individuals, many of them retired from distinguished careers and holding multiple graduate degrees, quickly bonded into a support group for achieving their goals in writing," Dr. Tarpley recalls. When the semester ended, the group did not want to terminate their friendships and literary activities. They organized the Silver Leos Writing Club," he added.

The group now meets from 2 until 5 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month at the Alumni Center on campus, welcoming new members to join in critiquing stories and poems by club members and hearing guest speakers. The club has attracted members from the Commerce area, Greenville, Sulphur Springs, Tyler, Kaufman, Lone Oak, and Dallas.

The club's first printed anthology has been launched, and manuscripts are invited from the public on the subject of memories of old E.T., representing recollections of campus history between the founding of East Texas Normal College in Cooper in 1889 until its merger with the Texas A&M system in 1996. Manuscripts may be submitted to the Texas A&M University Alumni Center, Commerce, TX 75429. The recommended length is 500 to 1,500 words. Manuscripts will be considered for publication in the first volume until April 1, 2010. Release of the book is planned before homecoming 2010.

Dr. Tarpley considers the memoir writing course the most amazing group of talented personalities he has ever taught. "They were responsive and creative beyond all my expectations, and it is such a privilege to remain in contact with them as advisor of their writing club," he said.

At the end of the spring course, members of the class expressed their feelings about the experience in letters to Dr. Tarpley. A sampling of their comments appears on next page:

The Writing Center

Hall of Languages
Room 103
Monday-Thursday,
9am-2pm

Additional hours are
available
in the
evening and on
weekends at

Gee Library:

Sunday-Thursday

6pm-9pm



Bernice Dawes created a crossword puzzle with all the answers referring to achievements of the instructor.

"Memoir writing filled a vacuum in the lives of a number of us. The stories we had to tell were lying fallow in our memory banks. We learned in this class how to put a shine on our work." (Earl Stubbs)

"I will continue writing. Thank you for your inspiration." (Jan Vowell)

"I wish I had waited to write my memoirs until I had taken the class." (Avon Acker)

"I have some great, unwritten stories to leave for my family, and this course will be the driving force in getting that done." (Bobby Harper)

"Thanks for teaching me how to write my life story." (Ann Mitchell)

"What a joy it has been to write from the heart for a bit and not all from the head!" (Deborah Porter)

I now believe it is possible for me to learn to write." (Pat Parker)

"By all means, this course had been the golden egg I was looking for in getting started writing my memoirs." (DeLois Stolusky)

"This has been one of the most fun things I have done in years." (Dewayne Bethea)

"Thanks so much for bringing us together for this class and giving a little shove to put things on paper that our families will enjoy reading." (Earlene Bethea)

"Thank you for organizing and conducting this class. With your help, I've been able to take a giant step forward in my memoir writing." (Jerry Hutton)

"Not only did I learn new skills, but now I have a new confidence, new motivation, and new friends." (Carole Williams)

"The value of your careful editing and critiques are of great help to me." (Carroll Adams)

"Watching the metamorphosis of this class as a whole has been an amazing process. It has given me the courage to continue to write ." (Bobbie Purdy)

"It has long been a wish of mine to write in some form, and you have given me the little push I needed to continue." (Kaye Gross)

"I want to thank you for this course that has given so many of us a new lease on life." (Toby McDowell Harty)

"I have always had the desire to learn how to write my memoirs so my children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren would know what life was like before they were born. Through this class, I have learned enough to get me started fulfilling this desire." (Nelma Dodd)

"You were my teacher when I was twenty-five and now again after retirement. I was so blessed to have you." (Sam McCord)

"Our goal of developing excellent communication skills has been enhanced by your personal touch." (Lewis Allen)

"The past few years I have been writing my memoirs in my head when unable to sleep. This class motivated me to continue writing memoirs about family and events, implementing your ideas and suggestions." (Mary Beth Tuck)

"You have pointed each of us in the direction that we wanted to go, all the while telling us where those commas should and should not go." (Coleen Hines)

"The class was a magical span of not quite three hours in which the outside world and my 'other life' took a back seat to the memoir writing course. We could feel our writing skills growing with each composition." (Shirley H. Moore)

"You might call us a rag-tag class when we began this journey. However the teacher helped us "clean up our acts" gave us the tools we would need to accomplish our goals, encouraged us to be individuals, and critiqued our writings in a way that was never harsh or demeaning." (Lavonne Wells)

**"The Silver Leos
began as a
graduate course
in
memoir writing
taught
by Dr. Fred Tarpley
during the
2009 Spring Semester."**



**"The Silver Leos
Hold monthly
meetings in
the university's
alumni center for
writing critiques
by members and guest
speaker
presentations."**



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**"Coffee is available everyday in the department main office.
Everyone is welcome"**



Dr. Attardo, Department Head (center), enjoys a coffee break, with student workers Myranda Willard (left) and Leticia McCullar (right), right before Thanksgiving.



Notable Alumni News

Just a Note to say Thanks!

Thanks for sending the newsletter; it was fun to re-connect in some small way with a department that greatly influenced my life and work.

For much of my life, I've been a professional writer in one field or another. For most of the last 20 years, I wrote exclusively for the major magazine markets and was a long-time Contributing Editor at both Reader's Digest and Family Circle, concentrating primarily on art-of-living essays and non-fiction dramatic narratives.

I've all but retired from that arena now but still enjoy writing travel pieces for a magazine that targets motorcycle enthusiasts, allowing me to share my passion for motorcycles with my writing craft (and my wife's love of traveling).

Thanks again for keeping me posted on the department.

All best,

William M. Hendryx, B.A., 1968



Recent Faculty Publications

Dr. Kathryn Jacobs has published two chapbooks of her poetry:

Advice Column, Georgetown, Kentucky: Finishing Line Press, 2008.

Signs of Our Time, Columbus, Ohio: Pudding House Publications, 2009.



Some of her recent publications also include:

"Damaged Goods" *New Formalist* VIII.i. Summer, 2008.

"At the Convention of Disabled Veterans," *Xavier Review* Spring 2009.

"On the Platform" *Acumen*. 61, Summer 2008.