Hartzel Hall: A Community

Fletcher: My first visit to Hartzel was as an adjunct faculty member seeking employment. On that day, I also visited Dr. Carol Pulham in her office, which struck me as spacious and inviting. On the basis of office ambiance alone, I wanted to teach at Cedar Crest. My faculty office at UCLA seemed, by comparison, cramped and cold. Indeed, my memory of my time at UCLA includes visions of long hallways with closed office doors, as English faculty members tended to make themselves available to students only during scheduled office hours. How different the experience of Hartzel, where English faculty generally keep their office doors open whenever they are on campus and invite students to come in to chat even if their official office hours have already ended or have not yet begun!

Most faculty offices in Hartzel have two closets: these spaces are reminders that Hartzel was once a college dorm, complete with a dining hall and bathtubs in the first floor ladies room and in the Humanities department office (both removed during a renovation). Today’s Hartzel is a welcoming place for both faculty and students alike. The English common room contains a literature collection and a sign inviting students to borrow any book they like. The main lounge plays host to literary club meetings and other English program gatherings, including receptions and readings. In early September, the lounge was crammed with students who came to be treated to an English tea, complete with scones. A couple of years ago, the literary club held a sleepover at which literary games were played and classic movies watched. Clearly, English students find Hartzel to be their home, and the faculty are happy to hear their voices in the building—even when they shout up and down the stairs to each other about class work and the latest poem they’ve read or written.

Nagle: As a commuting student to Cedar Crest, Hartzel Hall plays an essential role in my college education and experience. As I recall my very first (and nervous) steps up to the porch of and into Hartzel, I realize now the feelings of walking up those stairs are so much different four years later. Hartzel is home to Preterite, Cedar

(Continued on page 2)

Mark Doty to Read at Cedar Crest

Poet and nonfiction writer Mark Doty will visit Cedar Crest to read from his work on Thursday, October 2nd at 7:00 p.m. in the 1867 Room of the Tompkins College Center.

Doty, the only American poet to have won Great Britain’s T. S. Eliot Prize, is the author of six books of poems and three memoirs, most recently Fire to Fire, School of the Arts, and Dog Years.

Among his many awards are two NEA fellowships, Guggenheim and Rockefeller Foundation Fellowships, a Lila Wallace/Readers Digest Award, the Witter Bynner Prize, a Los Angeles Times Book Prize, and the National Book Critics Circle Award.

This event is co-sponsored by the English Program and the Cultural Programs committee and is free and open to the public.
Hartzel Hall: A Community

(Continued from page 1)

Crest’s literary club, which I am president of, and also of Xi Kappa, the English honor society. Preterite meets right inside the door, in the main lounge complete with a fireplace. The club’s belongings are kept in a room upstairs. The lounges in Hartzel play host to Humanities lunches, pizza parties, and Preterite events such as Haunted Hartzel, when the building is decorated in orange and black and readers share scary stories.

Another thing that must be mentioned about the stairs leading to Hartzel is that oftentimes the person venturing the stairs will be greeted by faculty and/or students in clusters of conversation. It’s a welcoming experience and hard to pull away from if you’re in a hurry. So, next time—or the first time—you walk up the stairs, give yourself some extra time to be swept away by the talk of news or literature. Once you do get inside, if you need help finding a room or an answer to a question, Lydia Orban, the department secretary (or should I say lifeline) will always be happy to help. And once you look through the literary magazines in the lounge or drop off a paper, be sure to check out whose door is open down the hall because, in Hartzel, the professors always have open doors and open ears.

Calling All Readers . . .

Love to read? Join the Cedar Crest Book Club! The Alumnae Office has received requests to start a book club/discussion group. Here’s your chance to let us know of your interest. The objective of the Book Club is reading for pleasure with informal discussions and light refreshments.

There will be an organizational meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 9 in Hartzel Hall lounge to find out how many people are interested in starting a Book Club, to select a book to read, and to set a meeting date (preferably in early-mid November) to discuss the book. Please contact the Alumnae Office at alumnae@cedarcrest.edu or call 610-606-4600 to let us know if you will be attending this meeting. If you are interested in participating in the Book Club but cannot attend the organizational meeting, please contact Susan Ritter ’02 at smitter02@verizon.net who will keep you updated with meeting dates, book selection, etc.

These informal Book Club discussions will be held on campus. Initially, we plan to discuss 1 book per semester. If the group wishes to read more than 1 book per semester (and therefore meet more frequently), we can discuss this at the organizational meeting or adapt later on.

As the Book Club grows, we hope to have guest authors, professors, and other guest presenters lead the discussions. Refreshments will be served at each Book Club night. There is no charge to attend, and the Book Club is open to alumnae of all ages, current students, and others interested in great books.

Students to Discover Literary Britain

Next May, Cedar Crest students and English alumnae will travel to the land of Shakespeare, Scott, and Dickens to learn how British writers have used their “home” landscapes and cityscapes in their poetry, drama, and fiction. Their ten-day study-abroad experience will take them to Edinburgh, the Lake District, York, Stratford, Oxford, London, Bath, and Stonehenge. Dr. LuAnn McCracken Fletcher will be leading the tour in conjunction with her spring semester offering of “Touring British Literature: The Importance of Place.”

“I’ve wanted to take students abroad for a long time,” Fletcher commented. “British literature is so steeped in history and location—giving English majors the chance to see Emily Brontë’s moors or Virginia Woolf’s London is helping to open up the fictional worlds these writers create to students’ imaginations in a new way. I’m pleased to have the opportunity to introduce readers not only to the literature I love but to the culture that produced so many fabulous writers.”
Lauren Sanders '08: Writer Extraordinaire

The Humanities Department at Cedar Crest College has spent years shaping the minds of young women, developing their talents, encouraging their growth, and preparing them for life after that of College.

One such woman is Lauren Sanders, a 2008 graduate of the College, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English. Sanders spent three years as an English major, after initially entering Cedar Crest as a science major. And, it is through the English Department that Sanders developed and grew as a writer, although her MySpace page states, “I secretly hate capital letters.”

While at Cedar Crest, Sanders participated in clubs such as Sisters Inc, was the lead copy editor of the student-run newspaper, The Crestiad, ran cross country, and also participated in Preterite, which puts out the College’s literary magazine each year. Sanders won all three categories of the club’s writing contest in Spring 2008, with poetry, fiction and nonfiction pieces being titled “Thaw,” “Gravity Fails,” and “To Rebecca,” respectively.

Upon graduating from Cedar Crest, Sanders found herself working as a product description writer for a company called GSI Interactive.

“I started as an intern but I was so awesome that a few minutes later they hired me full-time. Not really a few minutes, more like 6 days, but still it’s basically the same thing,” Sanders said.

At GSI Interactive, Sanders spends her time writing two- to three-sentence descriptions of products, such as running shoes, clothes, and toys, for the Internet.

“Basically, I’m like Elaine from Seinfeld, only for the Internet, and also less funny,” Sanders said about herself.

(Continued on page 4)

Dr. Carolyn Segal Wins Teaching Award

Dr. Carolyn Segal said she felt humbled when she learned that she received the 2008 teaching award from the Alumnae Association.

“It means a great deal,” the Associate Professor of English at Cedar Crest said of receiving the annual award. “Students are saying ‘we get what you’re doing.’”

Faculty who receive this award must be nominated by students, faculty or recent graduates, according to Sue Cox, Executive Director of Alumnae Affairs. Twenty-seven faculty members received nominations in 2008. Those nominating faculty are asked to write an essay illustrating the professor’s excellence in teaching including enthusiasm in the classroom and currency of material taught.

And according to students, Dr. Segal fits those criteria.

One of Dr. Segal’s favorite and most popular classes is “Women Go to the Movies.” In the class students read books and watch film adaptations by women and about women.

Dr. Segal said she developed the idea for the class in 1997 when the then-president of the college, Dr. Dorothy Blaney, told faculty she was going to award a series of presidential grants for innovation.

Dr. Segal said she looked for a women-centered course with a subject that would appeal to a sizeable part of the population of the school.

“The answer was film,” Dr. Segal said.

Dr. Segal has taught the class just about every year since then – sometimes twice a year. One of the aspects of the class she likes is the mix of students from various majors and classes.

A sampling of books and films from the syllabus include Rebecca, Girl, Interrupted, The Joy Luck Club, and The Color Purple. Dr. Segal’s personal favorite of the films she has taught and written about is the 1959 Imitation of Life.

“To me it’s the Moby-Dick of films,” Dr. Segal said.

Dr. Segal’s interest in film and women in film appeals to her students.

Linda Misiusa, ’07, said the combination of a film course that focused on women was exactly what she was looking for in a class.

“Women Go to the Movies was full of women questioning the representation of women in film, and also perhaps how they viewed themselves as a result of the stereotypes portrayed in films,” Linda said.

Classmate Jennifer Woytach, ’07, said the class changed the way she watched films.

“I learned to be more aware and appreciate the genres of women’s literature and film,” Jennifer said. “And, to this day, [I] will watch a film and remember lessons learned in Women Go to the Movies.”

That’s the outcome Dr. Segal has seen from this class.

“Students tell me that they learn about films and they learn about themselves,” Dr. Segal said.

As for her teaching, students say they look to Dr. Segal as an inspiration: “Dr. Segal has an obvious passion for her craft and serves her students as a teacher and by example,” Jennifer Woytach said.
The Cedar Crest English major offers students a solid fundamental background in American, British, and World literature; allows students to develop strengths in creative, scholarly, and professional writing; and invites students to explore more specialized areas such as linguistics and critical theory. The major is designed to prepare students for graduate study and for careers in teaching, publishing, business, government, journalism, advertising, and other language-related fields. More generally, the discipline of English enables students better to understand and respond to their world through the spoken and written word, both within the academic setting and beyond.

Lauren Sanders ’08

(Continued from page 3)

About her education from Cedar Crest, Sanders said, “Cedar Crest did an amazing job of setting me up with opportunities outside of the school that contributed to me being so awesome at GSI, like an internship with East Penn Publishing and another with Bicycling Magazine.”

Now that she is done with her undergraduate education, Sanders is moving on to study at Goucher College, in their low-residency Creative Nonfiction MFA program, where she is planning on producing a nonfiction manuscript at the end of two years. Through this program, she spends two weeks a year on the Goucher campus and does the rest of her work through the internet.

Sanders will take the future as it comes to her, stating only that she hopes it includes a giant trampoline and a rabbit with long ears.

Poetry and Shakespeare

This fall, students and local English alumnae will be traveling to the Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival in Waterloo, NJ. This biennial festival plays host to nationally- and internationally-known poets who come to read their work. Among the many poets reading at the festival this year are Billy Collins, Lucille Clifton, Jane Hirshfield, Ted Kooser, Naomi Shihab Nye, and Sharon Olds. Students in Dr. LuAnn Fletcher’s Shakespeare class will also have the chance to participate in a second literary field trip when they go to see Romeo and Juliet performed by the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey in October.

Call for News and Notes

Are you a Cedar Crest English graduate? Please let the program know what you’re doing! Send your information to english@cedarcrest.edu. We hope to share more news about English alumnae in future newsletters.