

ARTS ALUMNI

A NEWSLETTER FOR ALUMNI OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS

The Meaning in the Message

Media studies professor looks at messages delivered - or not - to students and children

PROF. MARK LIPTON, who began teaching in the media studies program at the University of Guelph-Humber and in U of G's School of English and Theatre Studies last September, has never had any interest in setting foot on routes that have already been laid out for people to follow. Since his teen years, he has created his own path based on his passions and what he believes is important.

Reading Neil Postman's *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* inspired Lipton to pursue his master's and PhD degrees in media ecology at New York University under Postman.

"I was interested in studying the ecology of media - how media change affects media environments, looking at the relationship between media and culture."

By the time he was 22, Lipton had completed his master's degree and began teaching a full course load while working on his PhD. Within a few years, he was appointed director of the master's program in media ecology.

"I believe good research comes from the personal, and because I was teaching so much, I decided to let my research grow out of my experiences in the classroom," he says. "When I showed my students media like print advertisements, I was

constantly struck by their unsophisticated readings, so I wanted to study their strategies of meaning making."

By studying the way 175 first-year students analyzed visual media, he was able to learn how young people were making use of media and constructing meaning. This allowed him to adapt his curriculum and pedagogy accordingly.

While teaching at NYU, Lipton also began teaching English and media arts at the Harvey Milk High School for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, intersexed and questioning youth in New York City.

Even though it meant an even heavier workload, teaching at Harvey Milk was important to him because he didn't have that kind of support system when he was a teenager, he says.

After teaching 15 different courses over 10 years at NYU, Lipton received a Mellon Foundation Fellowship to teach at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. He was hired specifically to help set up Vassar's new media studies program. Soon after his arrival, he met a woman in the process of starting the Children's Media Project, a not-for-profit arts and education organization focusing on media and technology.

Through that project, he wrote a



Mark Lipton

proposal to receive funding from New York State to create an anti-smoking curriculum for middle-school children. After U.S. tobacco companies lost a class action suit, they were required to give each state a lump sum of money, part of which had to be used for anti-smoking education. Lipton obtained more than \$700,000 for his anti-smoking curriculum from the New York State Children's Health Initiative, which was administered through the United Way and Dutchess County's Children's Services Council.

"Kids need to be told why they shouldn't smoke. It's about having the information to know why to say no.

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Alumni Contribute to Successful Careers Night on Campus

Eighteen U of G alumni and friends contributed to a fabulous Careers Night event for students in the bachelor of arts and bachelor of arts and science programs. More than 80 students enjoyed an evening dubbed "Circuit Training for Your Career." Students spent 10 minutes each with alumni representing careers such as law, art, library science, genetics, journalism and teaching.



Journalist Deirdre Healey BA 2001 with Guelph Mercury Editor, Rob Kelly

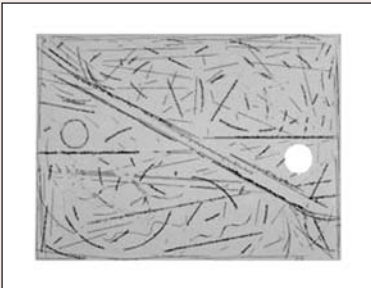
Wilde About Sappho Literary Event

The College of Arts joined with the Lambda Foundation of Ottawa to bring the 14th annual Wilde About Sappho national literary tour to Guelph. The tour featured five prominent writers from the gay and lesbian community - U of G's own Profs. **Dionne Brand** and **Sky Gilbert**, along with Warren Dunford, Anna Camilleri and R.M. Vaughn.

In conjunction with the literary festival, alumni, faculty, staff and community members contributed a total of \$16,000 towards a scholarship in gay and lesbian studies.

The tour will continue in London and Toronto in November. For more information, visit the website: www.lambdafoundation.org.

Spoke Club Welcomes Arts Alumni



David Urban MFA '94

TORONTO FINE ART ALUMNI joined faculty and guests at Toronto's prestigious Spoke Club for the official launch of the University of Guelph Print Portfolio Collection. The collection features prints by Guelph graduate **David Urban**, faculty member **Monica Tap** and **Tony Scherman**, a friend of the School of Fine Art and Music. For more information about the print collection, contact Prof. John Kissick at jkissick@uoguelph.ca.



Scholarship Co-Chair William Whitehead

philosopher in Canada and the first woman to hold the position of Distinguished Research Professor at York University. Code is a highly esteemed graduate of the Guelph-McMaster (now Guelph-McMaster-Wilfrid Laurier) PhD program in philosophy.

Languages and Literatures:

In December 2004, **Prof. Alan McDougall's** first book was published by Oxford University Press. It's called *Youth Politics in East Germany: The Free German Youth Movement, 1946-1968*.

Prof. Stephen Henighan is a temporary fellow at Wadham College, University of Oxford, for the 2004/05 academic year. His current project is a book comparing post-revolutionary narrative in Nicaragua, Angola and Mozambique. This project is supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.



Stephen Henighan

The Arts Alumni Spring 2005 College of Arts

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DESIGN:
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Message from the Dean

AS I WRITE THIS we are in the throes of what may be the last real snowstorm of winter. There has been the hope of spring in the air and the clocks will soon be changing. It is a time when we all think about shedding our heavy sweaters and winter boots and contemplate the joys of short sleeves and bare feet. Yet I know, as well, that you who are reading this will have long ago put away those sweaters and boots and may even be wondering if it's time to put on the air conditioning.

You, gentle reader, will also know the results of the Rae Review recommendations; it is thoughts of what those results will be that are currently preoccupying all of us in the College of Arts. Bob Rae's Review holds the potential to bring stability and accessibility to the university system, two things sorely lacking right now. We are just in the process of finalizing the 2005-06 budget but we don't know how much funding the government will deliver in that budget. Talk about planning in the dark! So as the days get longer, we can only hope that some light is shed on the

future of Ontario's university system.

Let's hope that as you read this you know that the future is indeed bright.

Along with short sleeves and bare feet, we are also anticipating the blossoms of spring, both those natural blossoms, and the metaphorical ones who are our graduands at the Spring Convocation. As always, we are so proud of our exceptionally talented and devoted students. They bring light to the college through the winter darkness and then go forth to light up our world. Other bright spots include our faculty - dedicated teachers and researchers who shed light on the past and present and who influence the future through their work and through their students.

And so, on the cusp of seasonal change, I am filled with the hope of spring and the longer days of brightness ahead for the university and for all of us who care about higher education.

Jacqueline Murray
Dean, College of Arts

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I think we should let kids know how they're being manipulated and ripped off and try to move them to action."

His workbook, *Smokescreens*, and textbook, *Smokescreens: From Tobacco Outrage to Media Activism*, are now used in middle-school classes throughout Dutchess County.

Lipton, who was appointed director of media education for the Children's Media Project, also conducted media literacy workshops for parents and teachers and was involved in setting up a youth media drop-in centre that helped students create anti-smoking public service announcements. These were shown on television stations throughout the Hudson Valley.

Lipton was drawn back to Ontario last year to be closer to his family and because he wanted to research the province's media literacy curriculum, which is one of the oldest in North America.

While teaching last year at the University of Toronto, he found he wasn't able to pursue his research interests fully.

"By coming to Guelph, I've been liberated to pursue my research the way I see it and to continue to do important work. I do things because no one else in the community is doing them and it needs to be done."

By Rachelle Cooper

www.arts.uoguelph.ca

AROUND THE COLLEGE

History:

History Department Launches Scholarship Fund to Honour Retirees

This year is very special to the Department of History because it marks the retirements of two of its most distinguished instructors and scholars, Profs. **Jamie Snell** and **David Murray**.



David Murray

Between then, they have devoted almost 75 years of service to Guelph students and to helping the University earn the reputation it enjoys today as one of Canada's top universities.

Prof. Terry Crowley, chair of the Department of History, has joined with graduate Elizabeth Bardon, BA '94 and MA '97, and other history alumni to establish a scholarship fund in honour of these distinguished



Terry Crowley

professors and their many contributions. The Leaders in Arts History Ontario Graduate Scholarship Fund seeks donations from history alumni and friends of the department. For details, contact Deborah Maskens at dmaskens@uoguelph.ca.

Philosophy: Philosophy Grad Receives Honorary Degree

Lorraine Code, MA '72 and PhD '78, received an honorary doctor of letters degree at the College of Arts convocation ceremony in February. Graduates were treated to an address by Code, the best-known feminist

Where Is Art?

WHAT IS ART? It's an age-old question that has never really been answered. And I am certainly not going to try to answer it here. These days, I'm more concerned with the question: "Where is art?"

Spurred by a recent trip to New York City, I have been questioning where we find art. It seems that art is most visible, accessible and employable in larger cities like New York, London, Toronto, Paris, Hong Kong and Los Angeles. And I don't just mean paintings on the walls. I mean the inclusion of art and culture in the narrative of everyday life. There are more newspapers with more reviews, more theatres with more seats, more libraries with more books, more galleries, more languages, more museums. More, more, more.

With more art in all forms, bigger cities increase the odds of success in an artistic or creative industry. In major cities, art is employable.

So what specifically do big cities have that help art flourish and build communities?

There are many practical explanations, such as funding and tourism, but let's think a little more philosophically here.

Big cities have more people, and people carry art, so big cities can support more art.

People carry art.

Picture all the College of Arts graduates gathered together. We are a city unto ourselves. At present day, the creative arts and humanities make up about 25 per cent of our undergraduate population. This means there is and will continue to be a powerful bunch of us wandering around out there trying to nurture the passion that led us to arts degrees in the first place.

Together, we can carry the artistic endeavours of each other and make our creative selves visible, accessible and employable.

This weekend, if you're going to a play, find one that's directed by a U of G grad. Buy a painting from a U of G artist. Read a book by a U of G writer. Believe me, they're out there - you may even be one of them - and if you want to know who they are, get in touch with us online and we'll tell you.

Fine Art Grad to Exhibit at Oxford

College of Arts graduate Pamela Stagg, BA '74, has botanical paintings in exhibitions at public galleries on both sides of the Atlantic this year. Her work will appear in Great Britain in "A New Flowering: 1,000 Years of Botanical Art" at Oxford's prestigious Ashmolean Museum May 3 to Sept. 11.



Anna Farago, BA 2001

For my part, I'd like to start dedicating this space to profiles of some of the amazing people who have walked the proverbial halls of the College of Arts. Don't be shy. Contact me. I'm happy to support you here. To be considered for an upcoming profile, write to me at collegeofarts@yahoo.ca.

Anna Farago
BA 2001

College of Arts Alumni Association President

Alumni Focus

AND THE WINNER IS...

A UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH GRADUATE won a Grammy Award earlier this year for his art design on an album by an alternative rock band.

Peter Buchanan-Smith, a 1995 BA graduate in fine art, won for best album packaging for his work on A Ghost Is Born by the group Wilco. The cover art features a white egg on a grey background.

Buchanan-Smith, who also wrote a book about Wilco, credits the band for being "the inspiration for many of my creative endeavours."

He also says the time he spent at U of

G was "a real turning point in my creative life." He thanks his professors, especially retired faculty member Chandler Kirwin, for their "guidance, generosity and inspiration."

After graduating from Guelph, Buchanan-Smith earned a master's degree at New York City's School of Visual Art. He is currently the creative director at Paper magazine in New York and is continuing to work on other book and music packaging and design projects. He and his wife, Amy, live in the East Village of Manhattan.

Alumni Recollections: A Look Back With Our Grads.

MY EXPERIENCE at the University of Guelph was an amazing time in my life. I spent three years studying at the University, enrolled in the bachelor of arts program as a French major. This program taught me self-discipline and self-motivation and kept me captured in my love for languages and all they entail.

Going forward, I am looking to continue my education in the French language, with aspirations of becoming a translator. The University of Guelph was my foundation for knowledge, and I am glad to have experienced all it has to offer.

Andrea Potter
BA '98
Burlington, Ont