Well, it’s been a banner month in the Language and Literature department! We had faculty members honored with awards or grants; a creative writing task force that rocked; and even a wedding! How sweet is that? Like the song said, it’s getting better all the time!

News Tidbits

Our chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the International English Honor Society, will be hosting a student literary conference on Friday, April 2nd. This upcoming event will offer students the chance to showcase their writing in a low-stress version of the professional conference format. The event will take place in SRHM 240 at the Sugden Resort & Hospitality Building (SRHM 240) between 1-4:00 PM. Please encourage your students to submit their 250-word abstracts to sigmataudelta@fgcu.edu before the March 19th deadline! Let’s contribute to the festivities scheduled throughout Lit Week by celebrating our students’ writing!

This summer and fall, our very own ex-crime-fighter (and resident novel writing/comp-teacher) Paul Szczesny will be offering his expertise to a very special student body: law enforcement personnel! Linda made arrangements with the sheriff’s office so that Comp I and II courses will be offered on a regular basis at the Lee County Sheriff’s Headquarters downtown. They assure us that classes will fill regularly and that these officers are serious about improving their writing skills. Talk about a captive audience!

Anna Haney-Withrow and Sheila Bolduc-Simpson were awarded a 2009-2010 Creative Course Design in General Education grant! The members of the General Education Council were impressed with the innovative design, sound objectives, and assessment features of their course redesign. They felt that the design would improve students General Education Competencies in written communication and critical thinking. Their innovative course redesign features a team-based approach utilizing a variety of electronic and Web 2.0 technologies. Great work, Sheila and Anna!

Sheila has also been quite busy in our extended community. She was elected to the Executive Board of Bonita Springs Literacy Council and will assume her new role effective February 19, 2010. Sheila also just returned from a service learning spring break project to the Dominican Republic with the Dominican Republic Outreach Program student club (D.R.O.P). They worked with two organizations there: Accion Callejera [Street Action] and
Niños Con Esperanza [Children with Hope]. In addition to working with the children in these school programs, the group distributed school supplies, shoes, and clothing among the students. Thanks, Sheila—for your tireless energy and generosity of spirit!

Thanks again to the Creative Writing Task Force for their hard work and dedication! Nathan Hill, Lori Cornelius, Jill Allen, and Kevin Allen—with Linda Rowland as facilitator—put together a top-notch curriculum proposal for our Creative Writing minor. Now begins the university curriculum review process...with an eye to a fully redesigned and implemented minor in the Fall of 2011. We can all be proud of this fine effort!

The Language Club – students teaching students – had their first meeting on Feb. 5th! Prospective student-teachers covering Russian, Dutch, Chinese, Spanish, French, Ukrainian, German, and Esperanto are taking part. This is a wonderful second language initiative, so would you please help make it a success by spreading the word? The Club is looking for both teacher and student members. Lessons will be once a week at 5pm. You can contact our own Carol Fulton with questions—or Yan Bohyn, student leader, at ypbohyn@eagle.fgcu.edu

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SPECIAL, SPECIAL MENTION

The 2009 Florida Book Award winners were announced last month—and our very own Jesse Milner was among the recipients of this coveted prize! Jesse was awarded a Bronze Medal for his poetry collection Neighborhoods of My Past Sorrow. The Florida Book Awards is the nation’s most comprehensive state book awards program. It was established in 2006 to recognize, honor, and celebrate the best Florida literature published the previous year. This is a wonderful accomplishment for Jesse, and it brings further distinction to our department and institution! Congratulations, Jesse!

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And a Special, Special announcement!

Love is in the air...

Oh, happy day! Wedding bells are ringing in the Language and Literature Department as two of our esteemed colleagues--our dear Amy Towne and Ian Peddie--tied the knot recently! The happy couple will celebrate their union more “formally” in May. Amy and Ian, your L&L family wishes you much joy in this most collaborative of ventures—may you cherish and nurture each other for a lifetime! You’re wonderful people and will no doubt find a lifetime of love and friendship together! Congratulations!
Where are they now?
Updates on our English graduates...

Anna Morano (B.A. English, 2009) was just accepted into Florida State University’s Italian Studies graduate program! She received a full tuition waiver and Teaching Assistantship!

Allison Dieppa (B.A. English 2008, English MA 2009) cooked a fabulous dinner for me during my recent trip to Albuquerque, New Mexico. She’s teaching for the University of New Mexico and doing well. She sends greetings to all her former profs at FGCU!

Karen Johnson (B.A. English, 2005) was selected as one of Florida’s best teachers! The Golden Apple Teacher of the Year Award is awarded annually to the top 10 teachers around the State. Since graduating from our program, Karen has been the Media Specialist at LaBelle Middle School. She recently started teaching Spanish as well. Karen was one of our top students in the major—and I’m not at all surprised that she’s a great teacher!

Katie Pankow (B.A. English, 2009) has received a full fellowship for an M.F.A. in Acting at the Theater Department at the University of Florida!

Rebecca Ormiston (B.A. English, 2009) has been accepted into the Graduate Program in Performance Studies at New York University!

    Break a leg, Katie and Rebecca! Broadway beckons! We applaud you!

That’s all for now…but don’t forget to send your contributions for next month!
All scoops, news, announcements, commentaries WELCOME!