

FRENCH STUDIES NEWSLETTER

Dear Alumnae and friends of the department of French Studies,

Welcome to our yearly newsletter, which you can now read electronically and guilt-free: no trees have been cut and no recycling will be needed for this year's publication!

This has been a particularly inspiring and productive year for us! Two important books were published by members of our department: **French Ceremonial Entries in the Sixteenth Century: Event, Image, Text** is a collection of essays co-edited by Nicolas Russell and H el ene Visentin on royal entries during the French Renaissance (Toronto: Center for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2007); and **Signs of Dissent: Maryse Cond e and Postcolonial Criticism,** is Dawn Fulton's book on internationally renowned French Caribbean author Maryse Cond e and the unique place she holds in the post-colonial literary landscape (University of Virginia Press, 2008). Congratulations to the authors!

During the year, we organized two successful round tables. In the fall, Maryse Cond e herself took part with her husband and translator Richard Philcox in a conversation about the politics of translation in which former Smith faculty member Nicole Ball and Leah Hewitt from Amherst College also participated. The event was appropriately entitled " 'Intimate Enemies:' A Conversation Between an Author and Her Translator." And in the spring, former Smith faculty members Larry Joseph and Christine Cano (also a Smith Alumna) presented a joint session on the topic of Parisian literary circles during the Belle Epoque. The discussion, for which I served as facilitator, was entitled "Publish and Perish: Marcel Proust, Catherine Pozzi, and their Literary Circles."

I am sure you will be happy to know that French Studies at Smith continue to flourish. Twenty-six French majors graduated at Commencement Day on May 18th and thirty-three more are in the pipeline! Twenty-three juniors will be in Paris next year with Peter Bloom (Music Department) as their program director. Thirteen students (including five guests) will be in Geneva under the supervision of Kiki Gounaridou (Theater department). In Paris, we have extended our academic affiliations to include the Ecole du Louvre (for art history students). This year was the first year that Smith hosted an exchange student from the University of Denis Diderot (Paris 7). She and the exchange student from the Sorbonne were both housed at the French House (Dawes) and together--along with Delphine Rumeau, the 2007-08 Lecturer from the Ecole Normale Sup erieure--they organized a very rich and attractive series of cultural events. Among the highlights were a cr epes sale to help fund the annual trip to Montreal, an elegant tea party in honor

of the students admitted to the Geneva and Paris JYA programs for 2008-09, and a double chocolate and cheese fondue to celebrate the graduating French majors at the end of the academic year! Meanwhile, thanks to our Ciné-Club, expertly run by our exchange student from the university of Geneva, students could watch well-known and not so well-known French and Francophone films throughout the year.

This year's senior liaisons, Alexandra Botti and Anna Estes, were particularly proactive in promoting French Studies at Smith! They almost broke the bank of the department by convincing us to pay for fifty-five bright red T-shirts with beautifully designed white logos (an owl on the back and an enthusiastic statement on the front reading 'On est *ouf* des French Studies!') The timing was perfect: the T-shirts came just in time to be handed out at the chocolate and cheese fondue party to all the FRN majors and the members of the department!

For the second year in a row, the department hosted a very well-attended wine and cheese party for French major seniors at the end of March (to beat the winter blues...) and we renewed the tradition of hosting a celebration party for them and their families, and returning alumnae, during Commencement weekend. For that, we joined forces with the program of Comparative Literature (conveniently chaired by Janie Vanpee, also from French) and held a joint party in the foyer of the Kahn Institute on the third floor of Neilson Library. The party, enlivened with many bottles of Prosecco and delicious cookies from La Fiorentina, was a resounding success. We saw several alumnae who had flown from various corners of the globe (Seattle, Morocco) and had the unexpected pleasure of seeing Valérie Riou, whom many of you will remember. Valérie was the assistant director of the JYA program in Paris from 2002 to 2007. She now lives with her husband and her two sons in ... Texas, where her husband is on a three-year assignment for a French company. Isn't it true that the world is getting smaller every day?

Five of our seniors received a scholarship to work as teaching assistants in France in 2008-09: Elizabeth (Lizzy) Ankudowich will be in the Académie d'Aix-Marseille, Elizabeth Cummings in the Académie de la Réunion, Jennifer Daley in the Académie de Rennes, Melissa Dimetres in the Académie de Créteil, and Sarah Muffly in the Académie de Versailles. In addition, Min Ji Kim, a double major in Government and French Studies, will be next year's Smith College fellow at the École Normale Supérieure in rue d'Ulm in Paris. She intends to take advantage of her fellowship to continue the work she started during her JYA in Geneva and study France's cultural politics towards immigrants. Congratulations to them all!

On the Alumnae front, we received news that Amy Balsler Blumenthal, '88, Campaign Manager in the Office of Advancement at Marquette University, will be attending her twentieth reunion on May 23rd! I hope she gets to see many of her classmates and I thank her for the lovely picture she sent of her two daughters, age 10 and 7: I can see so much of her in them! Mary Kristen Kelly, '07, is now at the Duke Law School; we wish her good luck in her graduate studies! And Ingrid Anna Cherrytree, '01, will receive in June her degree of Doctor of Medicine from the Oregon Health and Science University in Portland! *Félicitations, Docteur!* Ingrid says next year she will be at the University of

California at Davis to do her residency as an OBGY. Although she has yet to find another French major in medicine, she writes that she will keep looking! Tell us when it happens, Ingrid, and thank you to those of you who sent news and pictures. We love to hear from you!

Felicia Leveille, our beloved friend and administrative assistant, has decided after thirty-one years at Smith to retire! The two departments for which Felicia was an assistant, East Asian Languages and Literatures and French Studies, held a party in her honor on May 9th which was attended by the Provost and the Associate Dean of Faculty. Among the guests, there were not only Fee's numerous co-workers and longtime friends but also her children and her grandchildren, as well as many of our emeriti from the French department: Andrée Demay, Jo Ott, Trish Weed, Larry Joseph, and Marilyn Schuster. Those who could not be there sent flowers and written messages or called as did James Sacré from his home in Montpellier, France! Needless to say, whoever takes Felicia's place in Wright Hall 131 will have very big shoes to fill but we are very happy that Fee will now have more time to spend with her friends and family, and for herself! (From what we hear, she has already planned a trip to Ireland in the fall!) Good bye, Felicia! Have fun! And don't forget to come back and visit us!

Finally, I am also sending you my goodbye as I am about to step down from my position as Chair. The last three years have been very busy but extremely stimulating and informative--even for an old timer like me. The new chair will be Mary Ellen Birkett and it makes me very happy to know that the department could not be in more capable hands.

You will find a lot of pictures and more news at <http://www.smith.edu/french/events.html>

With my best wishes for a great summer!

Martine Gantrel, Chair