

# HUMANITIES

at BYU

BYU COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES  
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# from the Dean

## The Syntax of Creation



Dean John R. Rosenberg

Sixteenth-century stonecutters etched seven emblems around the upper gallery in the courtyard at the University of Salamanca. One depicts a woman sitting on a stool, holding in her right hand a pair of wings, and in her left, a turtle. Her right leg is relaxed and her left leg is extended as if she is about to stand up. An accompanying Latin inscription explains: “blessed are those who seek moderation.” Good intentions, but it is the wrong inscription: the mason chiseled here the words intended for the emblem one place over, and on that emblem he carved, “moderate your impatience by sitting, and your tardiness by getting off your duff,” clearly designed for the half-seated lady who weighs the wings (impatience) and a turtle (tardiness). The good stonecutter was too hurried to locate properly his message about being hurried.

Nearly two hundred years ago, John Keats published *Endymion*, a poem so long it would have tried the patience of the poet’s mother. Most readers see the famous first line, “A thing of beauty is a joy forever,” and then move on to the sports page. But there are some fine things to be gleaned from the courtship between Endymion and the complicated Cynthia. Seven hundred lines into Book I, Endymion complains about trials that caused him to “curse my disappointment.” Finally, he exclaims, “*Time, that aged nurse, / Rock’d me to patience.*” Time rocks—not to sleep—but to perseverance. Not always, but most of the time, what is hard endures, and what is easy is ephemeral. Elder Maxwell observed, “Therefore, if we use the process of time well, it can cradle us as we develop patient humility.”

What I like about schooling is its periodicity: every few months a new beginning, new faces, new content, a new day. What I dislike about schooling is its

periodicity, the closing judgments—things left unfinished, rough cut, and imperfect.

The solution for our periodic faltering is the syntax of creation: the orderly sequence in which things unfold as Creators plan, counsel, and watch together. The sequence is necessary and inalterable. First there is light so that what is created might be watched. Then the earth and skies are separated, and the celestial clocks—moon, sun, and stars—are wound and put in place to mark time. Dry land pushes out of the sea, and anchors the roots of all variety of vegetation. Complex organisms fill the sea and then the land, and, now that the earth is built, Eve and Adam move in. Then God rests. The narrative tells us that at each stage the Gods declared that what had happened on that day was “good”: they do this eight times in the Book of Moses.



Things that matter submit to the syntax of creation. We grow day by day, line upon line, experience by experience. Unreasonably, sometimes we seek Day Seven privileges on Day One or Two, or we demand of ourselves expertise or excellence that more properly should be assigned to another day. God could not put animals on the land until they had



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We invite readers to update their email addresses with us. Please send updates to Matthew Christensen at [mbchristensen@byu.edu](mailto:mbchristensen@byu.edu)

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something to eat; he could not cultivate vegetation until there was dry land; dry land was not possible until it was separated from the seas; and the sea first had to be divided from the firmament. And of course, first, there had to be light. What I find reassuring is what God did *not* do. At the end of Day Five he did not say, "after all this work and all this time, all I have to show for my effort is fish." What He did say was that "all things which I had created" up to that time "were good." So it is with our education, our careers, and our relationships. We may not be finished, but we can be acceptable—sufficient unto the day.

Next to Salamanca's mislabeled emblem, we find another, correctly glossed, emblem—a dolphin and an

anchor—with the words "hasten slowly." The velocious dolphin, like the wings in the first emblem, suggests ambition, innovation, and eagerness; the anchor and the tortoise remind us of the restraint of tradition, of patience, and of sequences. Erasmus noted, "Make haste slowly . . . means the right timing and the right degree, governed alike by vigilance and patience, so that nothing regrettable is done through haste, and nothing left undone through sloth." The dolphin and wings, the anchor and turtle are the timekeepers of the syntax of creation.

## A Chinese Weekend in Washington

Last April a trio of BYU students won awards at the national China Bridge Speech Competition hosted by the Confucius Institute at the University of Maryland. Thanks to the contributions of generous donors, three BYU students were able to compete: Ian Christensen, Myungho (Scott) Kim, and Seth Walters. Other contestants were sent by university Chinese programs from all across the country. The judges consisted of Chinese professors from various universities, and each judge awarded scores to each contestant in three categories: speech, question/answer, and performance.

The speech category left BYU contestants in good standing, with Ian Christensen's speech on travel during the Chinese New Year achieving the highest score in this category. Scott Kim's speech on his experiences learning Chinese and Seth Walters' speech explaining many Chinese characters were also warmly received. The next part of the contest was the Q&A. Contestants from BYU did exceptionally well, with all three earning 10 out of 10 points for answering each question correctly.

The final portion of the contest consisted of performances. Ian Christensen, the first BYU contestant to perform, exhibited his talents with a traditional Chinese performance of Kuai Ban Shu, a type of poetry recitation accompanied by a beat clapped out with small handheld bamboo percussion instruments. Scott Kim then performed a self-composed piece on the piano that mixed modern Chinese pop songs and a traditional Chinese tune. Seth Walters then expertly recited a tricky Chinese tongue twister. All performances were well received.

When the points were tallied and the final results announced, Ian Christensen and Scott Kim were both awarded second place, with Seth Walters in third place: a very strong showing from BYU. First place was awarded to the only contestant from University of Maryland, whose performance telling Chinese idiom stories using Internet slang was particularly outstanding.

Each BYU contestant expressed gratitude for the chance to represent the university in a national speech competition and for the support of the donors who made their participation possible. They gave special thanks to Professor Wang Shu Pei for her assistance and coaching.





### Wordsworth Exhibition at the Harold B. Lee Library

Paul Westover of the English Department and Maggie Kopp of the Harold B. Lee Library have created an exhibition in the Harold B. Lee Library tracing the origin of the idea of national parks back to the leading poet of the English Romantic Movement, William Wordsworth. Wordsworth inspired millions of hikers, climbers, and artists as well as later American authors such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, and Edward Abbey. The library's exhibition includes both Wordsworth's writing and examples of those who followed him, including first editions. All of these American writers grew up on Wordsworth's writings. Emerson even visited the aged poet in 1833, and his "Nature" was in some ways an attempt to complete Wordsworth's work. "Nature," in turn, became a major influence on Thoreau's Walden. The display runs through October 2013.

## Faculty and Staff *awards*

- ◆ Congratulations to several College of Humanities faculty members who were recently awarded college and university fellowships, lectureships, and awards.



**Michael Bush**  
*Center for Language Studies*  
Creative Works Award



**Mark Davies**  
*Department of Linguistics and English Language*  
Humanities Center Fellow



**Codell Carter**  
*Department of Philosophy*  
Humanities Professorship



**Dan Dewey**  
*Department of Linguistics and English Language*  
Humanities Center Fellow



**Jared Christensen**  
*Dean's Office*  
BYU Controller of the Year



**William Eggington**  
*Department of Linguistics and English Language*  
Humanities Professorship



**Harold Hendricks**  
*Office of Digital Humanities*  
 Creative Works Award



**Janis Nuckolls**  
*Department of Linguistics and English Language*  
 James L. Barker Lectureship



**Kimberly Johnson**  
*Department of English*  
 Douglas R. Stewart Teaching/Learning Fellowship  
 P.A. Christensen Lectureship



**Marc Olivier**  
*Department of French and Italian*  
 Humanities Center Fellow



**Nieves Knapp**  
*Department of Spanish and Portuguese*  
 College Outstanding Teaching Award



**Christopher Oscarson**  
*Department of Humanities, Classics, and Comparative Literature*  
 Alcuin Award



**Francesca Lawson**  
*Department of Humanities, Classics, and Comparative Literature*  
 Humanities Professorship



**Don Parry**  
*Department of Asian and Near Eastern Languages*  
 Religious Education Transfer Professor Award



**Yvon LeBras**  
*Department of French and Italian*  
 College Humanities+ Award



**Leslee Thorne-Murphy**  
*Department of English*  
 Douglas K. Christensen Teaching/Learning Fellowship



**Karen Macfarlane**  
*Department of Humanities, Classics, and Comparative Literature*  
 College Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Award



**Debra VanAusdal**  
*Department of French and Italian Languages*  
 President's Appreciation Award



**Patrick Madden**  
*Department of English*  
 Young Scholar Award



**Shu-pei Wang**  
*Department of Asian and Near Eastern Languages*  
 Karl G. Maeser Professional Faculty Excellence Award



# Moving *on*

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## Retirements

Several faculty and staff have or will retire in 2013. Some were featured in the Spring issue. Contact Karmen Smith (karmen\_smith@byu.edu) for contact information.



Steven Walker

STEVE WALKER distinguished himself as the only MA candidate in the history of BYU and probably the world to write a second master's thesis because he lost the first one. Possibly as a result of another sort of clerical error, he finagled a PhD from Harvard. The professional honor he cherishes most is maxing out in *Princeton Review's* national 300 Best Professors as a "four-pepper hotty." He has published an even dozen books on Christian literature and the Bible as literature, and more articles than make good sense. Steve will miss BYU. An incurable workaholic, addicted to haunting the halls of JFSB by night, virtually every night, he will miss his role as what Bert Wilson called "The Ghost of Christmas Never." A compulsive teacher, he will miss even more the dedicatees of both his first and his final books: "To my students, for all they teach me." An avowed hermit, he will nevertheless miss most the colleagues among whom he has worked, every day for forty-seven years, however difficult or however fulfilling the day: colleagues who have not only mentored and encouraged and aided and abetted him, but loved him; colleagues who have shown him how to be wiser and more awake and—what matters most to him—a better friend. The BYU Humanities experience has meant so much to him that he may never get over it, ever.



Beth Hedengren

AFTER A PARTICULARLY disastrous day of student teaching as an undergraduate, Beth Hedengren announced, "I will never, ever be a teacher!" So instead of seeking a high school teaching job, Beth started the English MA program at BYU, became a student instructor in freshman English, and realized that, after all, she loved teaching. Now she is retiring after some 40 years of teaching writing at BYU. At first, Beth taught part-time while raising five (wonderful) children along with her patient and supportive philosophy professor husband, Paul Hedengren. Since 1998, Beth has worked with the BYU Writing across the Curriculum program, helping professors learn how to more effectively teach writing in their various classes. From 1998 to 2008, Beth also coordinated the Writing Fellows program, training over 500 writing tutors and thereby facilitating the tutoring of some 16,000 students. She is the author of two textbooks. She has been awarded the English Department Part-Time Faculty Award (1992), the University Part-Time Faculty Award (2002), the Honors Professor of the Year (2009), and the Faculty Women's Association Citizenship Award (2013). Best of all, she has been honored to work with great students and colleagues. And she has loved teaching writing.

JOHN HALL (Humanities, Classics, and Comparative Literature) graduated from BYU summa cum laude with a double major in Latin and Greek. He completed an MA and PhD at the University of Pennsylvania, accepting an appointment at BYU in 1978 in Classical Languages and Ancient History. During his 35 years on the BYU faculty, John served as department chair of HCCL, was academic director of the inaugural BYU museum exhibit about the Etruscans, which was on loan from the Vatican, and academic consultant for several subsequent exhibitions, and for many years was on the FARMS Board of Directors. His publications encompassed not only topics of Roman history, Latin Historiography, and Etruscan Studies, but also books regarding early Christianity and ancient Greek New Testament Studies. His research contribution was recognized by the university with his appointment to the Eliza R. Snow university professorship in 2006. John brought the headquarters of the Classical Association (CAMWS) to BYU, serving first for seven years as its secretary-treasurer and publisher of the *Classical Journal*, and a few years later as the association's national president. In recent years he has been heavily involved as both an author and editor on the *BYU New Testament Commentary*. In retirement he maintains his regular work schedule on that project, as well as continuing involvement with the International Temple Studies Association and the Institute for the Study of Ancient Religions.

## In Remembrance



Dean Farnsworth

DEAN FARNSWORTH, Professor Emeritus of English, died on April 30, 2013. Dean held a doctorate in literature from the University of California–Berkeley and served on the English faculty at BYU from 1953 until his retirement in 1984. His education was interrupted while he served as an officer in the US Army during World War II. Dean had a life-long love of literature and music and was an accomplished vocalist and violinist. He had an adventuresome spirit, enjoyed traveling, and took his family abroad for periods of time to Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

We invite reader response on any of the following topics. Please send an email of inquiry or a full write up of 50–200 words to [melinda\\_semadeni@byu.edu](mailto:melinda_semadeni@byu.edu) for possible inclusion in future magazines. We think many of you have meaningful stories along these lines. Please let us hear them!

- “Classes That Made a Difference”
- “Teachers Who Made a Difference”
- “Books That Made a Difference”
- “Ideas That Made a Difference”
- “The Humanities in My Life”



# BYU's Fourth French Summer Camp for High School French Students

By Alex Rose  
French major and camp staff member

This summer, more than five thousand miles away from his current home in Zagreb, Croatia, Connor Rowe entered a room in the BYU Conference Center with 44 other excited high school French students. He would spend the next sixteen days with these students, participating in the classes, workshops, presentations, and activities offered by the BYU French Camp. As the camp came to a close late in June, Rowe said, “BYU French Camp is an awesome experience where you can make new friends, learn to speak a language, and enjoy the advantages of an immersion program.”

French Camp is made possible each year through the efforts of the Department of French and Italian in coordination with BYU Conferences and Workshops. Robert Erickson, the French Camp director, works with two local French teachers, the BYU French faculty, and a staff of mostly BYU students to tailor a curriculum that earns each participant the equivalent of one year of high school French credit.

Upon their arrival, students took a placement exam and were assigned to classes according to their French proficiency. Two experienced French teachers, Dave Nielsen (Canyon View Junior High) and Charlotte Finlinson (Corner Canyon High), lead the language classes. Students attended these morning classes daily and followed an accelerated curriculum focused on increasing their ability to speak French in a variety of situations.

After lunch, the campers attended culture presentations, sports activities, or arts and crafts workshops. They engaged in presentations in such subjects as the Tour de France, Senegal, French architecture, the Renaissance, and French cinema and photography. Students developed skills in painting, sculpture, and other visual arts. They sculpted gargoyles, made their own impressionist paintings, and designed and created their own t-shirts. They learned “pétanque,” a popular sport in France. Working with a professional instructor, campers took a condensed fencing course, both learning the rules of the sport and participating in scrimmage matches. French cooking classes taught the skills of preparing flan, quiche, croissants, ratatouille, and crêpes.

Students published two editions of “La Révélation,” a camp newspaper they named, wrote, and produced. Another group of students created a twenty-nine-page camp yearbook. Small groups were tasked not only with the production of media (photos and graphics) for their publication but also with the creation of an online presence for the camp (Vine, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram). At the end of the program, the campers prepared a program for parents and faculty. The performance included musical solos, poetry readings, and dance numbers. Every camp attendee participated in two choir numbers and a dance number.

Based on student feedback, this year’s French camp was a major success. Many said they wanted to return next year. To read the responses left by camp participants or learn more about how to sign up for next year’s French Camp, visit [ce.byu.edu/cw/french/index.php](http://ce.byu.edu/cw/french/index.php).



# Write On!

## Youth Writing Camps Flood Campus with a Wave of Creativity

By Christine Cluff Thompson  
(English Ed '94)  
and Sadie Rawlinson  
(English Ed '07)

They came from as far away as Arizona, Nebraska, and Calgary. Some came to combat boredom, some came with dreams of becoming a playwright, novelist, or poet; and admittedly, some came simply because Mom signed them up with a complementary this-will-be-good-for-you nudge. But regardless of the circumstances surrounding their enrollment, participants in this year's BYU Youth Writing Camps were far from disappointed by the experiences offered them on campus this summer.

It is no secret that every summer young people from across the globe flood campus in order to attend one of the many sports camps the university offers. Recognizing this, Dr. Chris Crowe, professor of English Education, figured that if athletes were willing to come from all over the world to improve their jump shots or refine their serves, wouldn't young writers be willing to come and refine their writing skills and spend a week associating with others who share a common interest? The answer to Crowe's query came in the form of eleven youth writing camps led by his colleagues from the Central Utah Writing Project. Housed in the English Department, CUWP partnered with BYU's Conferences and Workshops to make this youth writing camp vision a reality. And in just two year's time, this reality has been deemed a dream come true for many young writers, parents, and instructors alike.

Clad in neon orange t-shirts that proudly proclaimed "I am a Writer," participants met on campus for one and two week spans, engaging in every type of writing imaginable. While camps entitled "Exploring [and Polishing] the Writer in You" offered young writers a chance to experiment with a variety of genres, others were more specialized, honing in on everything from art to nature, web design to sports writing, flash fiction to

*This writing camp has been deemed a dream come true for many young writers, parents, and instructors alike.*

poetry, and graphic novels to classical literature. In just their second year, the youth writing program has more than tripled the number of camps offered, reaching out to a much larger group of young writers who can benefit from this type of focused instruction.

Regardless of topic, each camp followed the same basic schedule, staying true to Writing Project structure. The Scribble, much like an athlete's warm up and stretch, prepped the young writers by allowing them time to respond to a different piece of writing every day, selected and read to them by their instructors. A quick-write of sorts, the Scribble offered campers a

place to flex their creative writing muscles and then share that creative genius with a captive audience—an audience that not only shared a common interest in writing, but also soon learned to share a common interest in the individual writers themselves—a key component of any successful writing group.

Campers went on to share their writing throughout the week as they engaged in specific writing lessons aimed at addressing the struggles that plague writers at every level: getting started, clarity and concise language, strong word choice, structure, mechanics, and the development of unique ideas. After a lesson that explored the various ways to begin a novel or short story, campers (ages 12–14) generated the following enticing opening lines in a matter of minutes:

*It all started with a casserole. One casserole was all it took to change my life forever. —Lilly*

*Looks usually don't matter. Unless you look like that. —Amanda*

*There was a woman who decided she had turned into the wrong person. I was that woman. —Emma*

*January, February, March, April, May, June, July . . . These are the months of the year, or so they say. —Grant*

Providing young writers with a realistic look at the world of writing and publishing, guest authors added a dimension to the writing camps. Annette Luthy Lyon (English '95) was the author featured in the “Exploring the Writer in You” camp and quickly gained rock star status among the youth she addressed. Sharing her journey to publication and leading campers through a few of her favorite writing exercises, Lyon’s presentation made it evident that the guest author is an integral motivating force at such camps.

Regardless of their future writing endeavors, it is likely that all of the young participants in the BYU Summer Youth Writing Camps—whether they gain rock star publishing status or not—will look back on their experiences here on campus and say, “I had a great time and learned a lot” or maybe even “Mom was right. It really was worth it.”



Students create their own stories at BYU writing camp



# Encountering different *Cultures*

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by Dilworth Parkinson

Department of Asian and Near Eastern Languages

*This article is adapted from Professor Parkinson's August 2012 College of Humanities Convocation*

Several years ago, my father flew to Japan to visit my sister, who was working there at the time. He was taken by my sister and her Japanese roommate to a small town in the north of Japan to visit the roommate's family. At one point, all the women of the family left to go shopping, leaving my father alone with the aging Japanese father to watch TV. My father spoke no Japanese, and the Japanese father spoke no English. Both were provided with a plate of grapes next to them on the mat on which there were sitting. My father sat there eating his grapes and trying to figure out what was happening on the TV. He had soon created a small pile of grape seeds on his plate. After a while, he happened to glance over at the elderly gentleman next to him and noticed that there were no seeds on his plate at all, but rather a small pile of grape skins. Although they couldn't speak to each other, their eyes locked for one terrible moment in which both seemed to recoil and say, "You swallow that, and you spit that out?! Is that normal?!"

Anyone who has had an intense encounter with another culture has certainly had scores of such experiences. We are often unaware that many of the things we do as a matter of course are really governed by rules provided by our culture and that many of these rules are relatively arbitrary. Experiences like this bring us up short, not just because they make us aware of the strangeness of the foreign culture but because they make us see our own culture in a new way.

When we are locked away inside our own culture, it is easy to come to believe that the way our culture does it is simply the way the world is. We assume unquestioningly that everyone does things this way or sees things this way. For example, we may remain unaware that what tastes good is not a universal human characteristic but varies from culture to culture. Similarly, what is considered good art and literature can be very different, even though we might assume that everyone of good taste would see it our way. Islamic art, for example, values highly decorated surfaces, whereas one commonly hears the criticism in Western culture that similar patterns aren't really art, but something less, such as decoration.

One of the reasons there is a certain romance and adventure in having a close encounter with another culture is that we expect we will find this kind of "strangeness" that will not only help us understand the other culture but will also enlighten our own culture for us and help us recontextualize it or see it in a new way. Having directed a number of study abroad programs, I can confirm that almost all students begin their encounter in a foreign land with a great deal of excitement and romance. They are imbued with the idea that they are going to become bridges of understanding between different peoples and cultures and contribute in this way to world peace and mutual harmony.

Unfortunately, it does not take long for reality to hit them in the face. Encountering a foreign culture can be



Madaba, Jordan—south of the capital Amman

interesting, but it also turns out to be annoying and difficult. Not all cultural differences are as “cute” as spitting out the skins instead of the seeds. One of my female students came to me in a state of semi-shock after her male Jordanian teacher had carefully explained to her why women need to wear extremely modest Islamic clothing. “It’s like going to a barbecue,” he said, “walking by the grills and smelling all that wonderful meat and then having to turn it down because you are a vegetarian.” “Did he just compare me to a slab of meat?” she exclaimed.

Another student was invited by a family to dinner and, wanting to be a proper guest, made a tray of brownies and brought it. He was surprised that the family did not offer the brownies for dessert or after, and he ended up just taking them back home with him. Only later did he discover that his gift had been considered rude, since it is rude to imply with a gift that your host does not have enough food to serve you. It is the custom not to make a fuss over gifts but to simply lay them aside until the guest has gone. He also discovered later that by taking the brownies back home with him—taking back the gift—he had insulted them a second time, and even more grievously. All of a sudden, it seemed to this student that the simple act of accepting social invitations politely had become a minefield and, no matter what he did, he was bound to offend.

Generosity is a highly valued trait among Jordanians, and if you do get invited to dinner, there will be far more food than can possibly be consumed, and it will be pushed upon you mercilessly until you are literally ill. It is not easy to learn to eat just the amount you want and no more without offending your hosts. On the other hand, Arabs are known to privately make fun of American hosts for their food stinginess. They count the steaks, they say, referring to our practice of preparing individual plates for each guest instead of simply putting a large pile of steaks and other food in the middle of the table so that the guest can have as much as he or she wants.

In contrast, egalitarian behavior is a highly valued trait among Americans, and we pride ourselves on treating everyone the same, no matter what their economic status or level of education. It can come as a shock to our students that this trait is not universally valued, but is rather culturally determined. The apartment buildings in middle-class neighborhoods in Amman where our students live have building guards or concierges who typically have little education and are considered to be a type of servant in the local culture. Our students often try to befriend these men, but in the process they often simply confuse them, since the guards can’t figure out why they are doing it and have no category for such behavior. They don’t have a way of inhabiting the servant role and the friend role at the same time. One of our



students threw a barbecue party one weekend, inviting several Jordanian friends from the university. He also invited the building guard, whom he considered a friend. The next time we went to the institute where the students were studying, the secretary pulled me aside and told me that the guard had been highly offended and didn't know how to react. She explained that the guard would feel uncomfortable mingling with the middle-class Jordanian friends my student had invited and that even worse, all the guests were to bring their own meat. And although I spent some time talking with the student, I'm not sure he ever really understood what the problem was. He was just trying to be nice and thought he was being treated like a jerk.

As we see, close encounters of this kind can be both exciting and disturbing, highly educational but also highly problematic. It would be wonderful if we could send all of our students off to a foreign country and count on them coming back more open-minded, more tolerant, having become more aware of the unstated rules underlying some of their own cultural behavior. Sometimes, this happens. But recent research on study abroad programs indicates that for no small percentage of students, the experience is a net negative. They come back less tolerant, less open-minded, and more certain that foreigners are just weird. Instead of opening up to

the foreign experience and letting it change them, they close off and protect themselves from it, to devastating effect.

This phenomenon is sometimes referred to as “culture shock.” When bombarded with incomprehensible behavior, we have a natural tendency to retreat into ourselves and see the other as a threat. We explain away the strange behavior as stupid or venal and don't draw the conclusions about our own culture that are warranted. Interestingly, when students experience culture shock, they make little or no progress with the language they are studying, and some actually go backwards. I believe this is an important point. Encounters with foreigners have the potential of being highly educational, but when students close themselves off into a kind of fortress mentality, the educational potential basically drains away. Students who can work through this phase quickly are the ones who benefit most from the study abroad experience; they acquire real, long-lasting life skills related to the tangible benefits of withholding judgment, not jumping to conclusions about other people's motivations, being tolerant of differences, simply loving the people they are dealing with even when it is hard, and being willing to be changed by their encounters with them. These life skills build habits of mind and heart that prepare students to face life's challenges. It takes humility to really learn about others and about yourself, and you must remember that every close encounter with a strange culture can lead to as much insight about your own culture as it does about the other.

One of my study abroad students a few years ago became extremely fluent in the language, far above the level of the other students. I decided to interview him and ask him what had happened. Previous to the study abroad experience, he had been a reasonably good student, but certainly not at the top of the class. He thought for a moment and then said, “I just kept liking Arabs. Most of the other students got tired of dealing with the conspiracy theories and other attitudes they couldn't understand and started limiting their contact, from both a time and an emotional standpoint, but I just decided to keep enjoying them and spending as much time as possible with them.” I believe that his analysis was correct. Love, combined with humility, is the key to succeeding in study abroad.

As an educational endeavor, our goal in designing the study abroad program is first of all to give students



Study abroad students in Berlin



the linguistic and cultural skills they would need to be able to have these kinds of encounters in the first place and then to provide some guidance and support as they negotiate their way through them. But in the end, as much as we would like to, we can't guarantee the outcome. Just as in the Book of Mormon, after years of war, some of the people become more soft, more open, more humble, more easy to be entreated, and more likely to rely on the Lord, while others became hardened, less loving, and more likely to look out for number one.

I've spent time thinking about what it means to be an educated person and what we at BYU are trying to accomplish in seeking to educate students. The institution and the faculty members have high, and perhaps somewhat romantic, hopes for the effect that the experiences you have here will have on the rest of your life. As much as we wish it weren't so, we are aware that after a few years, you will have forgotten many of the facts that you learned and perhaps will only have a vague memory of the books you read. Unpracticed linguistic, mathematical, and other skills will atrophy. But our hope is that you will have somehow acquired a general orientation toward life, habits of mind and heart that will serve you well both in your career and in your personal and religious life. Our hope is that you will have learned to learn, learned to be lifelong learners, people who humbly realize they don't know it all and may even be partially mistaken in the things they do know, but who are confident in their ability to listen to others, see things from another point of view, and modify their own assumptions as that becomes necessary.

This is important not just for dealing with foreign countries and romantic, faraway places and cultures. It doesn't take very long in a marriage for one to discover that one's spouse is a foreign country, that we bring to the marriage vastly different assumptions, and that it takes tolerance, listening, patience, humility, and love to work through that, just as much as it does to negotiate a foreign culture. Likewise, coworkers, bosses, local church leaders, and neighbors can be as opaque and unpredictable as a Jordanian building guard, with just as many land mines keeping us from really understanding them and effectively working with them to accomplish good things.

Life is an adventure and often a surprise. I'm going to conclude with two stories from a friend whose husband spent many years in the Middle East. Once,

she had to stay behind for medical reasons. When she thought she was sufficiently recovered to travel, she started her journey to join her husband. By the time she was changing planes in New York, she was clearly having trouble. A Jewish woman at the next counter asked if she needed help, but she said no, she was OK. Barely able to

*Life's adventure will bring us face to face with people and institutions that are easily misunderstood. Rigid or ideological thinking seldom gets us very far.*

walk, she dragged herself up a stairs to get something to eat, and then started feeling worse and worse and prayed for help. At that moment, the same woman came up to her and said she had a strong impression that she needed to find her again and offer help. This time, my friend accepted the help and was able to spend time in a special lounge, lying down, before the flight left. But interestingly, my friend reported being mildly surprised that the Lord would answer her prayers through a Jewish woman. It changed her view of her own religion to realize that.

This same friend, several years later, was living with her husband in Saudi Arabia. She was having very severe back problems and at one point was home alone and in really terrible pain. At that point, one of her Muslim neighbors knocked on her door and asked if she needed help. The neighbor said she had been doing her prayers and got a very distinct impression that she needed to go next door and check on her neighbor. Once again my friend got the help she needed, and once again she was amazed, and changed, by her recognition and realization that God answered her prayer and needs by inspiring a Muslim neighbor woman.

As we each reflect upon how to be effective lifelong learners, life's adventure will bring us face to face with people and institutions that are easily misunderstood. Rigid or ideological thinking seldom gets us very far in such situations. But when we withhold judgment, do not jump to conclusions about motivations, and patiently work through problems and issues, honestly trying to see things from the point of view of "the other"—in short, when we love and are willing to learn from others—we will be well served, and the world will become a little bit better place.

# American Studies in *Russia*

by Tony Brown  
Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages

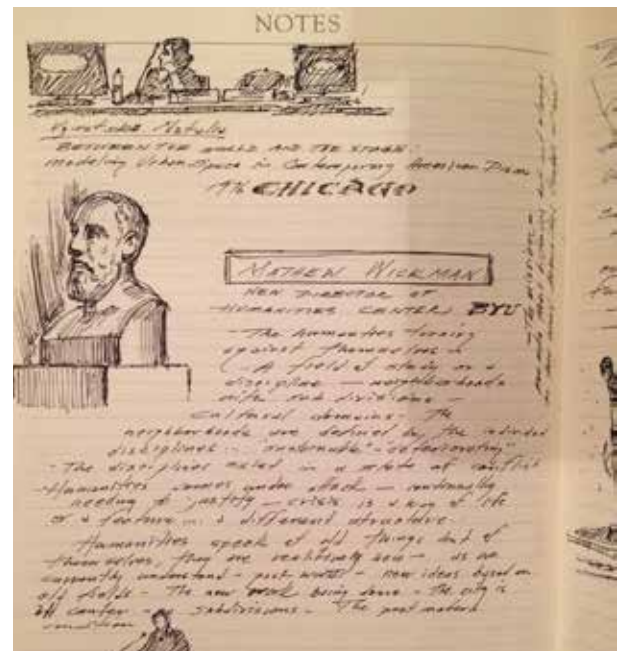
During the Soviet era, the word “American” officially meant reactionary, bourgeois, war-mongering imperialists; when actually, among many educated Russians, the word “American” meant interesting, liberal, energetic, open-minded people. In the early 1990s, a new “non-Soviet” university, the Russian State University for the Humanities, developed a unique unit—an American Studies Center—the two-fold goals of which were (1) to expose post-Soviet Russian scholars and students to a reasonably objective view and appreciation of American history, culture, and politics; and (2) to help American scholars and students to see themselves as others see them. Over the years, the Center has held conferences, facilitated professional and student exchanges, and published conference proceedings.

The theme of a May 2013 conference in Moscow was “Urbanism as a Dimension of American Civilization.” Abstracts were welcomed from language, literature, visual and performing arts, philosophy, religion, law, social studies, and anthropology. Thanks to generous travel support from the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies at BYU and American Councils for International Education, several BYU faculty members were able to attend and present papers.

Matthew Wickman, Associate Professor of English and Director of the BYU Humanities Center, delivered a plenary address about the state of the humanities in the United States. Reflecting on the widespread idea of a “crisis in the humanities,” Wickman spoke of how this sense of crisis (whether in terms of the difficulty of conveying specialized knowledge of humanistic subjects to a general public or the prospect of tightening university budgets) is actually an old story in the humanities.

Discussion of this crisis, he said, turns out to be beneficial to humanistic disciplines. It reminds humanists that they must not cease to collaborate with other disciplines in the production of knowledge. It also underscores the fact that there is an endangered quality to humanistic subject matter and that cultures, traditions, and even the humanities themselves should be safeguarded.

A January 2014 conference will be held at BYU and hosted by the College of Humanities. The theme will be “Humanities+: International Literacy through Experiential Learning.” Those interested in learning more should contact Professor Tony Brown at [tony\\_brown@byu.edu](mailto:tony_brown@byu.edu).



Pages from the notebook of Robert Barrett of the BYU Visual Arts Department.

# Recent Faculty Books



## *The Southern Garden Poetry Society*

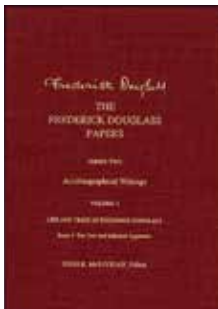
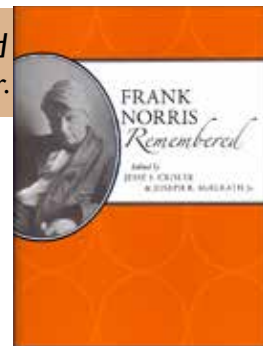
by David Honey of the Department of Asian and Near Eastern Languages

The southern Garden Poetry Society in Guangzhou was the only major literary club in Chinese history to be periodically reconvened over the Ming, Qing, and Republican eras. Beginning with an examination of its five founding members during the Yuan/Ming period, in particular Sun Fen (1335–93), the author traces the various elements of this Southern Muse that became embodied in later Cantonese poetry, further examining the issue of social memory through later reconvenings of the society.

## *Frank Norris Remembered*

by Jesse Crisler of the Department of English and Joseph McElrath, Jr.

This is a collection of reminiscences by Norris's contemporaries, friends, and family that illuminate the life of one of America's most popular novelists. The fifty reminiscences in the book recreate the short, spectacular life of this American author through the eyes of those who knew him best. Edited by two Norris scholars strongly qualified to produce such a volume.



## *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series Two, Autobiographical Writings, Volume 3*

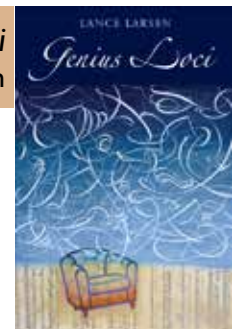
by Jesse Crisler of the Department of English and John R. McKivigan

Frederick Douglass, the American abolitionist, editor, orator, author, statesman, and reformer, was one of the most prominent figures in African American history and United States history. A firm believer in the equality of all people, whether black, woman, Native American, or recent immigrant, he was fond of saying, "I would unite with anybody to do right and with nobody to do wrong." This volume presents Douglass's autobiographical writings.

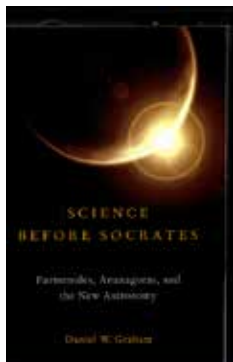
## *Genius Loci*

by Lance Larsen of the Department of English

Lance Larsen, the poet laureate of Utah, has published his fourth collection of poetry. His poems appear in many venues, and he has won a Pushcart Prize and a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. One critic wrote, "[Larsen's poems] are not lopsided poems, all head or all heart, but poems that invite and engage the intellect and the emotions simultaneously, so that the distinction seems hardly to matter."







## *Science Before Socrates*

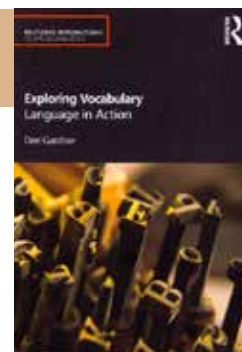
by Dan Graham of the Department of Philosophy

Professor Graham argues against the prevalent belief that the pre-Socratic philosophers did not produce any empirical science and that the first major Greek science, astronomy, did not develop until at least the time of Plato. Instead, Graham proposes that the advances made by pre-Socratic philosophers in the study of astronomy deserve to be considered as scientific contributions. A reviewer writes, “This is a work . . . of singular importance in its field.”

## *Exploring Vocabulary: Language in Action*

by Dee Gardner of the Department of Linguistics and English Language

Professor Gardner’s book is designed to raise teachers’ and students’ awareness of the interplay between the linguistic, psychological, and instructional aspects of vocabulary acquisition. It focuses on meeting the specific vocabulary needs of English language learners in whatever instructional contexts they may be in, with a special emphasis on addressing the high-stakes needs of learners in academic settings and the workplace.



# The BYU *Experience*

A Teacher Who Made a Difference

by Alyson Pugsley

Humanities, 2001

Panic set in when Professor Arthur Basset announced that we would find the curriculum for his Victorian Art and Culture class online. My Internet experience to that point had been limited to my campus email account! This class explored a culture on the brink of change in industry, politics, and the arts. I, too, was facing many unknowns during the Winter 2000 semester, which included not only the rapidly changing world of technology but an even more threatening unknown—it was my last semester at BYU. A

few years later, my perspective was more clear when I found myself sitting in the Tate Gallery in London in front of the painting “The Lady of Shalott.” The lady comes from a comfortable, though dull, world and looks to one of danger and uncertainty. Her expression is full of sadness *and* strength. I remembered that Pre-Raphaelite works were a focus in Professor Basset’s course, and this painting embodies a major theme of Victorian art—the magnificence and knowledge of the past fusing with hope and preparation for the future. This class helped me appreciate that life includes many such transitions during which we will have to bravely face the unknown, armed with beauty and experience from the past.

John R. Rosenberg  
September 27, 2012  
Dean, College of Humanities  
4002 JFSB

Professor Rosenberg:

My name is Liz Batty and I'm writing to express my appreciation for the grant that I received for the 2012–2013 school year. I am currently pursuing a degree in Latin American Studies with a minor in International Development. Upon my graduation in December 2012, I plan on earning a Master's degree in International Affairs.

The grant I received during spring semester enabled me to travel to Mexico City and complete an internship with the Academy for Creating Enterprise. I worked with microenterprise students as they generated over \$30,000 in a capital from seven bamboo leaves and seven beans in twelve weeks. I also had the opportunity to be project manager of the first entrepreneurship competition that the Academy has sponsored in Mexico City. We awarded more than \$17,000 to nascent entrepreneurs who competed in seven different categories. I was able to interview more than 100 entrepreneurs and see first hand the impact the Academy had on their lives and economic circumstances.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be the change I wish to see in the world. Throughout my life I will make positive contributions to society and to my family as a result of the education I have gained at BYU.

Sincerely,

*Liz Batty*  
Liz Batty



Liz's remarkable experience is just a sample of the incredible good BYU Humanities students are accomplishing throughout the world. There is tremendous need each year to financially assist students like Liz in making a positive difference in the international community.

International internships are a great way to help students gain real-world marketable experience. However, internships rarely are paid. We asked students what holds them back from doing an international internship. They unanimously indicate that lack financial resources are the number one impediment in their ability to participate.

To learn how to help students like Liz contact Matt Christensen at 801-422-9151 or email [mbchristensen@byu.edu](mailto:mbchristensen@byu.edu).

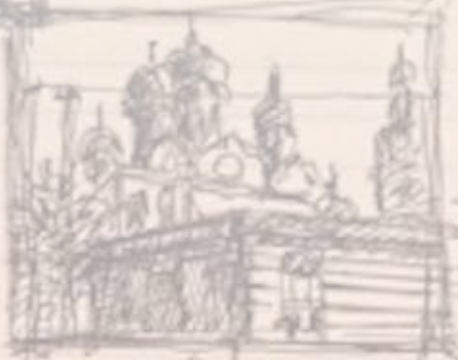
**LDS**  *Philanthropies*

Helping Change and Save Lives

## NOTES



IN THE  
COUNTRY -  
OUTSIDE MOSCOW



19th Century  
Church - outside  
Moscow



STUART  
WEAVER



Preservation  
"The country mouse and the  
city mouse"

The street  
"Whizzing down  
tracks: from  
American to  
European"

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feedback?

We'd like to hear your views,  
your memories of campus  
experiences, or an update on  
your life since leaving BYU.

Please email  
melinda\_semadeni@byu.edu.

*Humanities at BYU* is the  
alumni magazine of the  
College of Humanities.

CITY POETRY «Sours to Pae»: WALT WHITMAN