A Student’s Homage to Home

From their first lesson at both public or private schools in Haiti, young étudiants learn that Haiti is the Pearl of the Antilles. They are taught that every Haïtiens must esteem their patriotic colors, the badge of their dignity, and the symbol of their unity with unparallel fièrté. As a native Haitian, I still carry the nationalistic ideal ingrained in every child.

Enter Haiti through the Toussaint Louverture International Airport and sway to the rhythm of tambours and stringed instruments played by colorful troubadour musicians who welcome both visitors and natives to The Pearl of the Antilles. Outside, a bustling crowd awaits. But my native land is more than the traffic of Port-au-Prince—its capital city—where provincials migrate and where businesses take root. Drive past the exotic restaurants and hotels of Petion-Ville, past the privately owned boutiques and galleries with their tropical displays.

Travel on Route de Carrefour or Route des Croix-des-Bouquets towards white sand beaches where the scent of grilled conch and spicy pikliz garnish beckon natives and tourists. Watch small rural villages and sidewalk vendors whiz by. On Route de Montrouis, taste the succulent tablettes pistaches, creamy and crunchy peanut delicacies, with rich cinnamon lingering on your tongue.

Haiti is the tranquility one finds in the comfort of gatherings with acquaintances and friends; the cheering at afternoon soccer, basketball, and tennis tournaments during and out of season; Sunday dinner with family. It is the parade of young collegiates who rush out of gated educational institutions to mingle in the shade while savoring a cooling fresco—ice shavings immersed in a flavorful syrup of their choice—after school. It is the glimmering lights of Port-au-Prince that dance across the sky when the city sleeps.

Christopher Columbus discovered the island of Hispaniola in 1492. The western part, Haiti, gained its independence from France in 1804, becoming the first independent black republic in the world. Despite a tumultuous political history, the Republic of Haiti is a nation admired, not only for its pursuit of democracy, but also for the resilience of its people. Haitians understand that there is no other place like their Haiti Cherie. It is the place where they quench their need for art that is avant-garde and primitive, where music speaks beyond its words, and where fellow Haitians entertain one another with distinctive blagues that elicit riotous laughter from listeners.

Today, this picturesque tableau is marred by the events of January 12, 2010 when a 7.0 magnitude earthquake devastated the island nation. Since the quake’s epicenter is located southwest of Port-au-Prince, the capital city accrued considerable damage, and most of its government buildings, private businesses, and residences were destroyed. The city square of Champs-de-Mars, now adorned with tattered sky-blue tents, their fabric wavering slowly in the tropical wind, has become a haven for the thousands of displaced families affected by this tragedy.

As many families search for their missing loved ones beneath the rubble and bury a reported 212,000 dead, the international community rallies to support the 300,000 injured and those affected by the earthquake.

The resilience of the Haitian people during these trying times demonstrates their continued effort to surmount adversity. Suffering endured and the loss of those they mourn fuel their determination. The international community’s dedication, thoughtfulness, and generosity are a source of comfort and hope for a country challenged to redesign itself.

Their future remains untold but the Haitian people have demonstrated resilience. The Republic of Haiti continues to inspire its neighbors and the world waits for its transformation into the country many know it to be, the country I know it to be.

By Vanessa H. Fardin, MAPW student

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Web: www.kennesaw.edu/english Blog: ksuenglish.wordpress.com Twitter: KSUEnglish
Award-winning novelist David Anthony Durham gave a series of talks to students at Kennesaw State University and Marietta High School this past March and early April. Durham's visit was part of the English Studies Spring Festival.

David Anthony Durham, 40, is the author of six award-winning novels. Three are in the historical fiction genre and three are in the science-fiction fantasy genre. Durham's novel, Gabriel's Story, about African-American migration to the West in the 1880s, won the 2001 First Novel Award from the American Library Association's Black Caucus and was named a New York Times Notable Book. His fourth novel, Acacia: The War With The Mein (June 2007), is a speculative novel set in an alternative world. It won the John W. Campbell award for best new writer. Other novels are about an escaped American slave, Hannibal the Carthaginian general, and more in the Acacia series.

Durham has also published short stories in several anthologies, has served as a judge for the PEN/Faulkner Awards, and has taught at over a half dozen writing programs including the University of Maryland, the University of Massachusetts, and the Zora Neale Hurston/Richard Wright Foundation.

Peggy Comin, an MAPW student who attended Durham's discussion with KSU students, points out that the author explores many overarching themes in his novels. Comin, along with her classmates, identified "overcoming prejudice," "seeking freedom and journeying toward happiness," and "man's inhumanity to man" as a few of Durham's themes.

Impressed at such a large amount of writing accomplishments, Comin asked Durham about his daily writing process. "He said he does not write at a specific time each day, but writes in segments," Comin reports. "But once he arrives in the zone of writing a book, he writes all the time."

Durham shared, "During those times, I feel the impatience of wanting to finish the book and the patience of wanting to finish it correctly."

Professor Tony Grooms, the organizer of Durham's visit to KSU, noted, "Many times authors visit a school for just a few hours, but Mr. Durham's visit gives students an opportunity to engage with the writer over a period of several days."

For more information about Durham and his work, go to his website at www.DavidAnthonyDurham.com.

Scholarships Allotted to MAPW Study Abroad Students in Puerto Rico

You go to work. You brave the commute. You go to class. You crash. You’re a writer, but you have no time to write. And sometimes you think you should just run away to a tropical island, your personal writing retreat.

This summer, MAPW students can.

The Writers Workshops of Puerto Rico, a study “abroad” program in San Juan, Puerto Rico, offers MAPW students the experience of overseas travel designed for the budget and free-time of a working student. This year, thanks to university funds allotted for travel, any MAPW student who signed up for the Puerto Rico program received a guaranteed scholarship of $750, cutting the program’s cost almost in half.

With two-week sessions beginning anywhere from May to July, students can pick the best time for their travel and have the option of staying four weeks. Besides complete project freedom—short stories, novels, poems, plays, or any other writing project of their choosing—students also receive helpful peer and professor feedback on their work.

Andy Hall, a Composition Rhetoric student in his third year in the MAPW program, traveled to Puerto Rico to remove the distractions that kept him from writing well at home. “It was amazing how much more I was able to write each morning when I knew that an afternoon on the beach and an evening exploring the exotic streets of San Juan awaited me,” Andy said. During his two-week stay, Andy wrote several short stories and two poems for a story cycle he had been trying to start back home. “The low key workshop atmosphere was the perfect place for me to try out my early drafts,” he said.

During the Festival de San Juan Bautista, Andy even became an honorary Puerto Rican along with many of his MAPW peers as they threw their bodies backwards into the ocean three times at midnight, “thus conferring good luck and honorary citizenship.”

“What more could you ask for?” Andy said. “Class credit, exotic locale, affordable price. I’d recommend the program for anyone who loves to travel and needs a change of scenery to jump-start his or her writing.”

The Puerto Rico study abroad program will also be offered next summer.

Award Winning Novelist David Anthony Durham Visits KSU Campus

San Juan, Puerto Rico

Novelist David Anthony Durham

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For more information about Durham and his work, go to his website at www.DavidAnthonyDurham.com.
Must We Mollycoddle Our Students?

A report on:
Why Don’t My Students Think I’m Groovy:  
The New “R’s” for Engaging Millennial Students

Recently, faculty members from across campus met in the Leadership Room for a lively presentation by Dr. Christy Price of Dalton State College on how we can best connect with our Millennial students, those born between 1982 and 2002. Raised in a world that revolved around them as children, these students are sheltered, impatient, materialistic, self-absorbed and over-confident. They feel they are special and question authority. They are uncomfortable with formality (note their flip-flops). These were the children who received trophies for simply being on a team. They bore easily.

According to Dr. Price’s research, we cannot be satisfied with merely saying we teach our students; they have their own assessment. To form connections with these students we must read, memorize, and retain the five “R’s” that help them learn from us.

1) Relaxed learning environment: These students are more relaxed—in dress, attitude, communication, and learning. They desire interaction and involvement, and do not appreciate “being talked at.” They want us to be fair but flexible. We cringe at e-mails from students that read, “hey, Helen,” according to Price, but that’s the way they communicate with one another. Why are we any different?

2) Rationale for assignments and policies: Millennials reject rigidity and authoritarian power structure. “My pet peeves” on a syllabus means nothing to them. A 3x5 card surreptitiously handed to a student would more likely cease disruptive behavior:

Forgive me, but I noticed that your behavior (texting, talking, reading, laptop use) is potentially distracting to you and your fellow learners. For your benefit, and out of courtesy toward your colleagues, please focus your attention on our class activities. Thank you for doing your part in maintaining a positive learning environment.

3) Rapport: Millennials were raised central to their parents’ lives. They expect professors to connect with them on a personal level. Students need to perceive us as on their side, that we exhibit enthusiasm, sensitivity, openness, and comfort; that we are supportive and trustworthy.

4) Research-based teaching methods: Lecturing should be combined with a variety of discussions and application. Research from the National Training Lab shows that learning moves from passive at 5 percent with lectures to active at 50 percent with audio-visual and discussions to 75 percent with application (hands-on). Research, according to Price, suggests lecturing no more than twenty minutes followed by at least three to five minutes processing time. Interactive use of real examples and relevant multimedia such as PowerPoint or video is more relaxed and enjoyable, especially when the students know one another and handouts are provided.

5) Relevance: Students do not value information for information’s sake. We must make outcomes, content, and assessments relevant to qualities that employers seek. According to NACE Job Outlook 2008, along with technical and organizational skills, these qualities include communication, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills; motivation; analytical abilities; strong work ethic; and flexibility. According to Price, listening to a lecture and taking a test are not on the list.

The Millennials’ ideal course assessments are graded with a rubric, relevant to life or career, more than just tests or midterm and final, and experiential. The professor understands students have busy lives and includes more in-class and group work.

The Millennials’ ideal professor is approachable, nice, friendly, caring, and helpful; alert as to whether students understand; open-minded and flexible; energetic and enthusiastic; displays a sense of humor, and is entertaining.

Thus, instructors must ask themselves if we are we simply mollycoddling our Millennial students, or are we willing to become “groovy,” to adopt research-based methods to actually make connections? According to Price, it’s all a matter of choice, but in the end, as instructors we want students to demonstrate that they have learned from us.

By Ellen Taber, Assistant Professor  
Department of English

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Workshop

Georgia Writers Association presents: It’s a Mystery with Phillip Depoy on October 9, 2010 from 12-2 p.m. in the Leadership room of the Carmichael Student Center.

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Call for Submissions

Wag’s Revue invites you to enter its summer contest in fiction, poetry, and essays. Submissions are due May 31, winners are announced June 21. Winners receive a cash prize and publication in Wag’s Revue. Visit www.wagsrevue.com

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Keep in Touch

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Make Money Writing: It's a Mystery

Lisa Russell shares her Georgia Writers Association article on author Phillip Depoy published in the Examiner in February.

“Kill someone famous and write about it.” Atlanta author Phillip Depoy jokes about how to get a book deal at a Georgia Writers Association writer’s workshop.

“The second way to get a book deal these days is to get really famous for something other than writing and then ask a publisher for a book deal.”

Phillip Depoy, a successful mystery writer of the Flap Tucker and Fever Devilin series, explains that you can make money from writing, “It just depends on what you consider ‘making money.’” Depoy is the director of theater for Clayton State University, he scores music for award winning plays, acts, and writes great mysteries. Depoy confesses that his writing has become profitable. He says that he finally makes as much money writing as he does from his day job.

Phillip shared storytelling secrets at the Georgia Writers Association’s Second Saturday Writing Workshop at Kennesaw State University on February 13. He referred to Sir James George Frazer’s The Golden Bough (1900), a three volume collection of folk tales categorized by type and motif. Depoy said that people identify with great stories; by looking at folklore—stories that have been told for a long time—a mystery writer can learn how to write good stories.

Saturday, October 9, 2010 Georgia Writers Association and the Atlanta Chapter of the Sisters in Crime are bringing Phillip Depoy back to the campus of Kennesaw State University for a mystery writing workshop. Details are available at the Georgia Writers Association website, www.georgiawriters.org.

Phillip Depoy will be reading at noon on October 9, 2010 just prior to the Georgia Writers Association workshop in the same location. Mr. Depoy will read from his new mystery, The King James Conspiracy. His new novel involves conspiracy, intrigue, and murder surrounding the 1611 King James Bible translation. The King James Conspiracy has been nominated for a 46th Georgia Author of the Year Award for Fiction. There are over 100 nominations for this oldest literary award in the Southeast.

“Hunger Pains” Featured at New Works & Ideas

“Hunger Pains,” a play by Dr. Aaron Levy, Professor of English and English Education, was chosen as the featured play for KSU’s New Works and Ideas Week at the end of March. The staged reading, held in KSU’s Black Box Theatre, was cast with students from the theatre department and sold out every night—March 24, 25, and 26.

Following the performance, the audience participated in a discussion to provide Dr. Levy with feedback on what elements worked, what the audience disliked, and what challenges he faces in getting the play’s message heard by young adults.

The characters of “Hunger Pains” deal with real issues like eating disorders, sexuality, and acceptance—themes intricately woven into teen lives but rarely addressed openly in schools.

“If this was a Young Adult novel, it wouldn’t be a thing,” Dr. Levy says. Despite its potentially controversial nature, the play was chosen for a Gear Up Grant and will be read in front of an audience of 40 plus high school kids in May.

Dr. Levy is also the author of the YA Play “Pizza with Shrimp on Top.”

New Works and Ideas Week continued with student written, ten-minute plays preformed for free in the Stillwell Theatre the following Saturday.

The English Department Celebrates Shakespeare

On Thursday, April 22, 2010 at the Legacy Gazebo, Dr. Keith Botelho will host KSU’s 4th Annual Shakespeare Birthday Celebration. KSU students, alumni, faculty, staff, and administrators, as well as members from the local community, are encouraged to participate in a day-long reading of all of Shakespeare’s 154 sonnets (from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.).
Faculty News & Events

Dr. Keith M. Botelho released his book, *Renaissance Earwitnesses: Rumor and the Early Modern Masculinity*, through Palgrave Macmillan in December 2009. This semester, he plans to travel to the Folger Shakespeare Library for research on his second book, supported by the CHSS Faculty Scholarship Award. In April, Keith will present his paper, “A Little Beast: The Sovereignty of Bees and Man in *Henry V*,” at the annual Shakespeare Association of America conference in Chicago.


Dr. Oumar Cherif Diop, Assistant Professor of 20th Century Postcolonial Literature presented papers at the two conferences: The 19th Annual British Commonwealth & Postcolonial Studies Conference to be held in Savannah, Georgia, presenting “The Ethics of Violence in African literature,” and The 36th Annual African Literature Association Conference held in Tucson, Arizona, presenting “The Violence of Representation in African Literatures.”

Dr. Linda Niemann’s new book, *Railroad Noir: The American West at the end of the Twentieth Century*, will be released at the end of April by Indiana University Press. Containing beautiful photographs by Joel Jensen and narratives by Linda, the book is an important addition to Indiana’s prestigious railroad list.

Dr. H. William Rice presented a paper entitled “Bob Kaufman and the Limits of Jazz” at the School of Visual Arts National Conference on the Liberal Arts and the Education of Artists in October in New York City. He published an essay in the December (09) issue of *Big Sky Journal* entitled “Hunting among the Indians: Musings on Listening to the Land.” He has a story entitled “Uncle Ivory” forthcoming in the August (10) issue of *Gray’s Sporting Journal* and another, entitled “The Heritage,” forthcoming in a future issue of *Sporting Classics*.

Jeffrey Stepakoff, professor of Dramatic Writing, has received praise this year for his debut novel, a love story titled *Fireworks Over Toccoa*. Stepakoff, with a Hollywood career including Emmy-winning shows such as “The Wonder Years,” “Sisters,” “Major Dad,” Disney’s “Tarzan,” and “Dawson’s Creek,” says, “Love stories are appealing to people. They’re universal. After working 20 years in Hollywood, I understand them.” *Fireworks* is a lead fiction title for St. Martin’s Press and has received critical acclaim, being named a Spring 2010 Okra Pick by Southern Independent Booksellers Alliance and an April 2010 Next List Notable.

Ellen Taber recently published *Tybee Days: One Hundred Years on Georgia’s Playground Island*. The book, co-authored with Polly Cooper, is a sociocultural history of the island, its people, and their childhood stories. Divided into 24 chapter with 70 plus pictures, it covers the 1860s to the 1960s, when the famous Tybrisa Pavilion burned down and destroyed an entire way of life. Tybee was home to the Big Band era, ignored Prohibition, and hosted Dwight Eisenhower and our own Johnny Mercer. She also published *Sand Between Our Toes: The Tybee Island Family Photo Album*, containing 500 photos, captions, and anecdotal memories of islanders and visitors dating from 1900 to present.

Student News

The proposals of Harry Gatanis, Sera Turgut, Dhanashree Thorat, and Dionne Blasingame from the English Department have been accepted for presentation at the 13th National Conference of the Council on Undergraduate Research hosted by Weber State University in Ogden, Utah on June 19-22, 2010.

Congratulations to Intensive English Program students Claudia Castano and Judy Nguyen. Claudia was accepted to the MBA program at KSU and Judy was accepted to the nursing program at KSU. We’re proud of you!

Marsha Boyd, MAT English student, won the W. Geiger Ellis Student Teaching Scholarship for 2009 in a statewide competition. She was recognized and presented with the $1000 scholarship at the Georgia Council of Teachers of English annual conference at Callaway Gardens in February 2010.

Kathleen Pedro, MAT English student, won the KSU Outstanding MAT English student award for 2009-2010. She was formally recognized at the University Scholars ceremony on Apr. 2, 2010.

Debbie Roper, M.Ed. Adolescent English Education student, won the KSU Outstanding M.Ed. English student award for 2009-2010. She was formally recognized at the University Scholars ceremony on Apr. 2, 2010.

Anna Parkinson, undergraduate secondary English Education major, won the KSU Outstanding Undergraduate English Education student award for 2009-2010. She was formally recognized at the University Scholars ceremony on Apr. 2, 2010.

Congratulations to KSU’s Nominees for Georgia Author of the Year Awards! English Department Nominees: Ellen Taber (Tybee Days and Sand Between Our Toes, KSU Press) and Andy Plattner (The Kentucky Derby Vault). MAPW Student Nominee: Ray Atkins (Sorrow Wood)
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<tr>
<th>May</th>
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<td><strong>Georgia Writers Association Workshop:</strong> Finding Your Voice in Memoir Writing, 12-2 p.m. in the Leadership room of the Carmichael Student Center</td>
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<td><strong>Kennesaw Mountain Writing Project Summer Institute begins</strong></td>
<td><strong>Summer Graduation</strong></td>
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<td><strong>KSU Graduation</strong></td>
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<td><strong>First day of Summer Session I</strong></td>
<td><strong>First day of Summer Session II</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Georgia Author of the Year Awards, 7:00 p.m. at KSU Center</strong></td>
<td><strong>National Book Club Conference at the Atlanta Hyatt Regency</strong></td>
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