Greetings from the Department Chair!

On a sunny Saturday in May, Professor Phillip Serrato and I sat on Aztec Walk greeting prospective SDSU Aztecs and inviting them to make poetry with big magnetic words on our magic magnetic board. One by one, curious soon-to-be freshmen and their families puzzled over the words and proudly assembled poetry on the spot.

Maybe it’s been two years since you last sat in a literature class at SDSU. Maybe it’s been twenty. Whether you are an alum or friend of the department, I hope you still feel the magnetic pull of powerful literature.

We’re restarting our departmental newsletter, reaching out to friends and former students, to let you know that despite some rugged times for public higher education, our programs continue to thrive: preparing future teachers, lawyers, artists, businesspeople, writers, and editors.

Our department has a world-class faculty and graduate program in poetry, featuring superstar poets Professors Ilya Kaminsky, Marilyn Chin, and Sandra Alcosser. We also continue to be national leaders in the field of children’s literature, thanks to our National Center for the Study of Children’s Literature and Professors Alida Allison, Phillip Serrato, Joseph Thomas, and June Cummins.

And we are growing and changing with the times. This year, we’ve developed new curriculum that will prepare our students to put their majors to work in the fields of editing and publishing, including writing for digital media. And we continue to host outstanding speakers and visiting writers from around the country and the globe with events that are free and open to the public—including you.

Hope to see you or hear from you soon.

Sincerely,
Joanna Brooks
Chair and Professor

Alums! We Want You!

--Would you like to put an announcement in this newsletter updating thousands of fellow English alums about your latest news and accomplishments?

--Do you have an internship opportunity you'd be willing to offer an SDSU English or Comp Lit major?

--Would you be willing to speak to or mentor SDSU English and Comp Lit majors about the transition from college to career?

We are eager to hear from you. Please email Professor Brooks: jmbrooks@mail.sdsu.edu or call: 619-594-5271.

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New Undergrad Literary Journal Launches

*Aztec Literary Review,* a new undergraduate literary journal founded by SDSU’s chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, an international English Honors Society, has successfully launched its first issue! After reviewing approximately 100 submissions from students in the English and Comparative Literature department, the editors selected 19 pieces that showcased some of SDSU's outstanding literary talent.

The journal includes both creative and scholarly compositions in its Fall 2012 issue, with pieces ranging from poetry to literary analysis. To celebrate its first publication, *Aztec Literary Review* hosted an open reading on 15 February at the Scripps Cottage Patio, where writers—including Keith Armstrong, Cody Mauro, Clark Rhodes, Andres Hernandez, Dakota Lenz, and Megan Laddusaw—read aloud the work that was published in the first volume. The *Aztec Literary Review* will release a new volume each semester and looks forward to providing more writers with an outlet to publish and share their work in the future. To learn more about the *Aztec Literary Review*, and to read the Fall 2012 issue, please go to [http://aztecliteraryreview.wordpress.com/](http://aztecliteraryreview.wordpress.com/).

For updates about future publications and readings, follow *Aztec Literary Review* on Facebook! For inquiries and submissions, please contact aztecliteraryreview@gmail.com.

Quentin Bailey, Advisor

Happy 40th Birthday, Fiction International!

_Fiction International_ is celebrating 40 years of publication and 30 years at SDSU. Founded in New York by Joe David Bellamy in 1973, Bellamy offered the editorship to Harold Jaffe 10 years later. Jaffe enlisted Professor Larry McCaffery as co-editor, and _FI_ at SDSU was launched with considerable publicity.

McCaffery resigned his editorship in 1991 and Jaffe has edited it solely since then, his staff comprised of MFA and MA students, who, under Jaffe's tutelage, are responsible for every facet of the publication, including editorial, advertising, and marketing offline and on.

_Fiction International_ student-editors are receiving a hands-on course in literary journal publishing, which ideally will be of use to them after they leave the program. In fact there are ten or more former _FI_ student-editors who have since established their own literary journals in the US and abroad.

Under Harold Jaffe’s editorship, _FI_ is the only literary journal in America with a dual emphasis on innovative writing and social activism, and over its long tenure the journal has published important, venturesome writers throughout the globe. _FI’s_ themes have described a wide arc: “Third World Women Writers,” “Central American Writing,” “Japanese Fiction,” “DV8,” “Pornography and Censorship,” “Sacred and Shamanic,” “Madness,” “The Artist in Wartime,” “Fetish,” “Terror [isms],” “Real Time / Virtual.”

Please help _Fiction International_ celebrate its 30th anniversary at SDSU by subscribing or making a tax-deductible donation. Please also consider celebrating with us on May 15, 2013, 7:00 p.m., at the Whistletop Bar in South Park. For more information feel free to contact the editor at <hjaffe@mail.sdsu.edu>

Harold Jaffe, Editor
Children’s Book Review Marathon: Local Schools Win!

Nineteen volunteers enjoyed each other’s company for an afternoon during The 10th Semi-Annual Children’s Book Review Marathon on campus March 16. We chose our 26 books to review on the spot from the bulging shelves in the Center for the Study of Children’s Literature’s office, AL 218, and we took many more books home for future reviews.

The hundreds of books the Children’s Literature Program receives annually from publishers are reviewed online at sdsubooksreviews.blogspot.com. We then donate them either to The Children’s Literature Program bookshelves in Love Library’s 4th floor stacks, to Sweetwater and Chula Vista School Districts, to the SDSU Children’s Center, or, increasingly, to homeless shelters and refugee organizations in San Diego. To judge by the letters of thanks from teachers and librarians around the county, these donations are appreciated not only by teachers but especially by their students who enthusiastically help shelf the new books and savor reading them in class or at home.

The campus event brings former and current Master’s degree-level children’s/YA literature students together to share experiences and books, to network, to enjoy the company of other kids’ book lovers, and to munch on food provided by SDSU’s Center for the Study of Children’s Literature and also Department of English/CompLit.

The Book Review Marathons have become my favorite event. Many thanks to all who came and are sending reviews, to the sponsors for the repast, and to the publishers who continue to send brand new books for review. I’m already looking forward to next year’s marathon.

RSVP me if you’re interested in coming next year or in donating books—alison@mail.sdsu.edu

Alida Allison, Professor

Facility Accomplishments

Professor Marilyn Chin reads her poetry at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., May 1, as part of the “Necessary Utterances: Poetry as Cultural Force Conference.” Professor Chin has been the recipient of many notable awards including Pushcart Prizes for her poetry and fiction. Her newest book, Hard Luck Province, will appear from Norton in 2014.

Professor Alida Allison was honored in Spring 2012 with the SDSU College of Arts and Letters Award for Outstanding Service. Professor Allison and Professor Laurie Edson also received Mortar Board Society Outstanding Faculty Awards. Edith Frampton received a Teaching Excellence Award from the College.

Professor Joanna Brooks’s new anthology Transatlantic Feminisms in the Age of Revolutions (Oxford, 2012) was praised as “innovative” and “transformative” by the (London) Times Literary Supplement in April 2013. Her new book, Why We Left: Stories and Songs from America’s First Immigrants will appear from University of Minnesota Press in May 2013.

Professor Bill Nericchio has been on a coast-to-coast speaking and exhibit tour for Mexicay: Seductive Hallucinations of Latin/o Mannequins Proving the American Unconscious, an extended exploration of territories mapped in his book Tec[t]-Mex: Seductive Hallucinations of the Mexican in America (University of Texas, 2007). Follow the project on Twitter: @eyegien.

Professor Joseph Thomas published essays on Shel Silverstein in the Children’s Literature Association Quarterly and Poetry International; both belong to his highly-anticipated book about the beloved and wily children’s poet. Professor Thomas is the director of our National Center for the Study of Children’s Literature and The Lion and The Unicorn’s first poetry editor.

Professor Jeanette Shumaker’s article on the Irish writer Mary Lavin will be published in 2013 by the Irish Academic Press in Dublin. Also, her article on novels by contemporary Irish writers Mary O’Donnell and Susan Knight recently appeared in the South Carolina Review.

Jenny Minitti-Shippey’s chapbook of poetry, Earth’s Horse & Boys appeared with Finishing Line Press in February 2013. Professor Minitti-Shippey teaches our “Literary Editing
Faculty Accomplishments Continued

and Publishing” course for undergraduates, which has fostered the launch of five student on-line publications this year.

Professor Sandra Alcosser is a leading figure in the nationwide Language of Conservation project, which explores the intersection of literature and sustainability by placing poems in zoos and libraries. A book of essays on the project Creating Transformation: The Language of Conservation is being published this year.

Professor Hal Jaffe’s book of essays and “quasi-essays” entitled Revolutionary Brain was published in January 2013. His 1983 novel Das Indios will be translated into French and published by 13e Note editions (Paris) this fall.

Poems from Professor Ilya Kaminsky’s highly anticipated new book Deaf Republic received Pushcart and Poetry magazine’s Levinson prizes this year.

With the support of our Graduate Director Professor June Cummins, many of our MA students are presenting their work in professional conferences. This year, Brianna Kuhn, Sarah Burns, Arafiena Akbar, Charlotte Morris, Molly Hatay, David Penn, Alya Hameed, Ailxandria Lombardo, Paris Brown, Kelli Magargal, Grace Crawford, Megan Parry, Lauren Benard, Alyssa Fechner, and Jill Coste have presented at the Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association, Northeastern Modern Language Association, American Conference for Irish Studies, Popular Culture Association, Sylvia Plath Symposium, Western Jewish Studies Conference, and the USCD Graduate Student Gender Studies Conference. MA student Paris Brown was accepted into University of California at Riverside’s Ph.D. program in English and Ed Ortiz was accepted into the doctoral program in literature at UCSD.

Our MFA students continue to excel. Erin Rodoni, a third-year MFA student, won an “Intro Journals” award from the Association of Writing Programs for her poem “Leaving Labor and Delivery.” Erin’s poem will be published in the Colorado Review.