

CMU alumni Ashley Patton, (left) who teaches at North Elementary in Ithaca, works with Penny Lew, a middle school teacher in Farwell, on developing a new writing lesson.

Photo by Robert Barclay
CMU University Communications



Tracy Burton, Assistant Director of Public Relations, University Communications

After 29 years of teaching high school English, Kathy Kurtze returned to her classroom this fall with a set of fresh ideas and resources she gathered from her experiences with the Chippewa River Writing Project—a site of the National Writing Project now at Central Michigan University.

Kurtze was among 13 teachers representing K-12 school districts, Mid Michigan Community College and CMU, who participated in the first CRWP institute.

"The most exciting part was being introduced to new teaching approaches," said Kurtze, who teaches at Carson City High School. "The whole aspect of bringing technology into the writing process was brand new to me. Now, I'm excited to bring it into

my lessons. I want my students to do podcasts and learn about how this enhances our writing."

Sharing resources is one of the main goals of the National Writing Project, which operates with the concept of teachers teaching teachers and a mission to improve the teaching of writing and learning among kindergarten through college students.

During the institute, teachers share their best practices and ideas with one another. They participate in a number of hands-on activities such as teaching demonstrations and writing groups using innovative technologies.

The experience was equally beneficial to new teachers.

"I've gotten a chance to grow not only as a

writer but also as a teacher," said Ashley Patton, a 2006 CMU alumna who teaches at North Elementary in Ithaca. "I have new ideas to teach writing, and I've been able to learn from other teachers who have so much more experience in the field."

CMU English faculty member and CRWP director Troy Hicks said a new institute with another group of area teachers will take place next summer at CMU.

"The first Chippewa River Writing Project summer institute was, by all measures a success," Hicks said. "We had a diverse cohort of talented teachers from area schools, including one participant who traveled from northeastern Michigan to be a part of this institute."

Once teachers complete a summer institute they become National Writing Project teacher consultants and can go on to be mentors and teacher leaders in

their school districts and communities.

A grant from the National Writing Project and funding from CMU's College of Humanities and Social and Behavioral Sciences, the College of Education and Human Services, and the College of Graduate Studies all support the CRWP site at CMU.

Today, more than 200 National Writing Project sites are organized at colleges or universities across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Thousands of teachers participate in summer institutes each year.

To learn more about the Chippewa River Writing Project at CMU contact Troy Hicks at troy.hicks@cmich.edu or visit <http://chippewariverwp.org>

Central Sensibilities

Ambitious Fishes

C.J. Opperthausen, a CMU undergraduate and an active writer in his own right, had an inspiration that prompted him to try a new role on for size: "One morning, I woke up wondering if I would have any responses from editors of similar journals, and I decided that I would start up my own." His brainchild, a student-run literary journal called *Five Fishes Journal* focuses on publishing poetry

and short fiction in what's called the "Friday Bucket," which is unleashed the first Friday of every month. Each bucket features four poems and one work of short fiction, and the journal tends to favor and promote pieces that operate with a dirty, grimy attitude. "Without drive and a love of words and the way they can be put together like impromptu puzzle pieces," Opperthausen notes, "I

never would have been interested in starting up such a website and I certainly would not have the energy to keep it alive."

Five Fishes boasts interviews with selected writers, as well as reviews of current books, music, and movies. In the past, *Five Fishes* has interviewed David LaBounty, Randall Horton, Peter Markus, Jeff Vande Zande, and Nin Andrews. Peter Markus read in Park

Library's Baber Room in the fall of 2008, and Jeff Vande Zande is scheduled to read at CMU sometime during the spring. "Interviewing writers is one of my very favorite things about running the show," Opperthausen notes. The journal is powered by a distinct passion for literature, music and movies. Look for *Five Fishes* on Facebook and Twitter, and be sure to visit the site at fivefishes.net.



Upcoming Events

Monday February 15, 7pm: Zilka Joseph with Matt Echelberger at the Art Reach Center (a Wellspring Series Reading)

Wednesday, February 24, 8pm: Matt Roberson and Robert Fanning at CMU, the Park Library Auditorium

Monday March 1, 7pm: Matt Bell and Mick McGrath at the Art Reach Center (a Wellspring Series Reading)

Thursday March 25, 8pm: Alix Ohlin at CMU at the Park Library Baber Room

Monday April 5, 7pm: Matthew Olzmann with guest at the Art Reach Center (a Wellspring Series Reading)

Thursday April 15, 8pm: Keith Taylor and David James at CMU, the Park Library Baber Room

Monday April 26, 7pm: Blair with guest at the Art Reach Center (a Wellspring Series Reading)

Campion's Champion

Nicole M. Coonradt, (MA 2005) a third-year Ph.D. student in Literary Studies, a Teaching Fellow, and the Associate Editor of *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Theatre Research* at the University of Denver, writes with this good news:

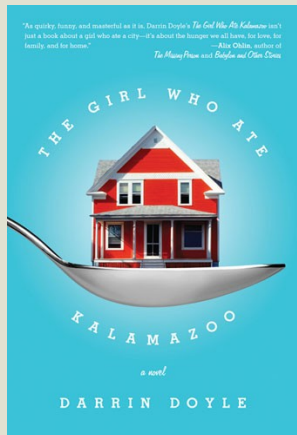


I was recently awarded a sizable grant to conduct research in England through the Catholic Record Society and the Andrew C. Duncan trust (specifically for non-UK scholars, regardless of race, gender, or religious affiliation). My proposed research on Edmund Campion is in preparation for what I hope will be a ground-breaking article on Campion's *Ambrosia: A Neo-Latin Drama* (c. 1577), on which, currently, *no scholarship exists*. The play is virtually unknown to the academic world—some may have *heard* of it, but practically no one has read it or really *knows* it. The original manuscript is now lost. The earliest translation of *Ambrosia* into English is by Joseph Simons for Van Gorcum-Assen press in the Netherlands, 1970. This text currently is unavailable for purchase in the United States;

I am still hunting for it elsewhere. Simons, who also serves as the play's editor, writes a useful introduction situating the play in the Latin dramatic and Renaissance traditions *generally*, but it lacks the extended critical analysis such a play deserves, especially within its historical context. The play is crucial evidence of the Jesuit Mission's participation in the Counter-Reformation both on the Continent, in Prague, and in England and how the play strengthens, reinforces, and clarifies that mission.

As scholars are now privileging revisionist history while more facts about the Reformation and the relentless persecution of Catholics are uncovered, to make the long-missing other half of the dialog public is paramount. These neglected voices prove so necessary to understanding the struggle if full. Campion's *Ambrosia* also can help us understand better other contemporary dramatists because Campion is working within a tradition while resisting Reformation strictures. Campion likely intended for *Ambrosia* to make its way to England to influence events more directly, especially Queen Elizabeth I; that never happened, though he was sent there himself to die a martyr for his forbidden faith. My recent comprehensive examinations covered Shakespeare, The Reformation, Renaissance Tragedy, and Jesuit Writing, during which the idea for this project began to take shape as I studied the play and the history, especially the strained cultural atmosphere in which it was written and produced. I was shocked to learn of its late translation, the lack of scholarship on it, and the absence of it in production since 1591, after Campion's martyrdom. Campion's recent biographer, Gerard Kilroy, calls the martyr's work "effectively suppressed." I hope to change that.

Fantastical Snacks



In his most recent novel, *The Girl Who Ate Kalamazoo* (St. Martin's Griffin), new English faculty member Darrin Doyle paints a captivating portrait of the all-American family—if the all-American family's youngest child ate an entire city in Michigan with a smile, that is. Doyle has a flare for writing about family dysfunction with a twist. With a unique blend of realism and fantasy, *The Girl Who Ate Kalamazoo* is the moving story of the hauntingly beautiful Audrey Mapes, who began her illustrious "career" by downing crayons by the carton only to graduate to eating an entire city one bite at a time. With vivid, acerbic wit, Doyle

details the life of the world's most gifted "eatist" through the eyes of Audrey's sister, McKenna. Through her eyes, we see the real tragedy of the Mapes story is not the destruction of a city, but rather, the quiet disintegration of a family who just didn't quite know how to love. *Publisher's Weekly* calls Doyle's novel "relentlessly inventive," and author Alix Ohlin writes: "As quirky, funny, and masterful as it is, Darrin Doyle's *The Girl Who Ate Kalamazoo* isn't just a book about a girl who ate a city – it's about the hunger we all have, for love, for family, for home."

A Ginger Affinity

Do red-headed characters in children's literature have anything in common?

Josh Benson, a graduate student pursuing an M.A. in English, thinks they do. He is currently at work on a thesis that looks at how red-headed characters are portrayed in children's books, among them *Anne of Green Gables*, *Pippi Longstocking*, and the *Harry Potter* books. Drawing on criticism that describes the historical origins of antagonism towards redheads, Benson is finding that having red hair singles a character out to be picked on, which is surely true of Ron Weasley, Harry's best friend. So too are red-headed characters often situated as outsiders in their worlds: Anne as a newcomer to Avonlea who despite repeated attempts never quite fits in, and Pippi the unconventional orphan living in a staid Swedish village where only Annika and Tommy appreciate her. Benson intends to defend his thesis this spring and will graduate in May with a Master's degree in English and a concentration in Children's Literature.

