

WRITERS BLOC

GLENVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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CATCH YA LATER

In this last issue of the academic year, we say farewell to our long-time composition specialist Dr. Marjorie Stewart, who is retiring at the end of this semester. We've also got summer book suggestions and a fun poetry style that we encourage everyone to try. And our student writing is always terrific. Please keep writing articles and essays! We'll be excited to see what folks have to share in fall. Until then, good luck on final exams, congrats to those graduating, and best wishes for a happy summer!



IT'S NOT REALLY GOODBYE

Dr. Marjorie Stewart has been a valued—and loved—member of the Department of Language and Literature faculty for well over a decade, and now she's saying farewell to the classroom. Retirement is right around the corner, and for her colleagues in the department and across the campus, Stewart will be missed. But wait . . . she's not going far! She's planning to volunteer on community action projects, remain involved in GSU's Little Kanawha Theater and Drama Club, and stay active in Glenville both on campus and off.

Stewart's retirement this year, coming sooner than she had originally planned, is actually the result of a serious issue. In autumn 2023, a fall and subsequent concussion sent Stewart to the hospital. Unrelenting headaches led her to a neurologist and filled her fall semester with a battery of tests, including CT scans, MRIs, and cognitive functioning. By spring 2024, everything changed. Stewart explained, "I was teaching the Creative Nonfiction class when my doctor called. I dismissed class and talked to her—she had the diagnosis of Alzheimer's. . . . The test that confirmed it was a special MRI with a dye (or something) that lands on the amyloids and shows where your brain is deteriorating."

Stewart had been noticing changes for a while. "It started with memory. The first thing that worried me was when we came back from Covid, I could no longer remember student names. I just couldn't do it, and I used to be able to. I used to have 60 students in a semester, and I'd know 48 of them. But I knew nobody." In general, Stewart's memory is fine—it's just a few very specific issues like this that she has pinpointed. She shared, "One of my friends who was being tested for Alzheimer's, his doctor said, 'When you forget where your car keys are, that's normal. When you forget what your car keys are for, you're in trouble. So far, I'm good on that one.'"

The memory issues aren't what has led Stewart to early retirement. Dealing with the life-changing news of her diagnosis alongside struggling with her insurance company to get coverage for Alzheimer's treatment put Stewart under enormous stress. "I spent most of the summer [of 2024] waiting for the fight with the insurance company to be over so I could get treatments." By the start of fall semester, Stewart was finally able to receive regular treatments at WVU Medicine at Ruby Memorial Hospital. She noted that the treatment—a drug called Leqembi administered through a venous port—"is something that is proven theoretically to slow down the process of the disease." The trips to Morgantown, her dedication to her writing students, and running a rural household for her husband and dogs completely sapped her strength. "I was hoping to get another year in; and before I had Alzheimer's, I thought I'd get two more in from now, but my energy level just is too low. In the fall semester, I had 67 composition students, and it totally burned me out." Her treatments have continued into this spring semester, with the exhaustion continuing to build. Stewart decided it was time to let go of teaching.

"I've been teaching for 26 years," Stewart reminisced, "beginning as an adjunct and eventually teaching in three schools at five locations. I had a one-year contract at a remote Penn State location, then was a full-time professor and writing center director for four years at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh, now defunct. When I saw which way the wind was blowing there, I started a job search. Melody [Wise] recommended that I apply here and voila! Here I am. This is my 13th year, so half my career has been at Glenville."



Banner photo by Jason Gum - Sidebar image by Magic Studio

SEND WRITERS BLOC SUBMISSIONS TO

melissa.gish@glenville.edu

Views expressed in the *Writers Bloc* are not necessarily the views of GSU.

CONTACT FACULTY AT

www.glenville.edu/departments/language-literature

Read more about Dr. Stewart's journey on page 2

MORE ON MARJORIE “MAX” STEWART

The first question everyone asks Dr. Marjorie Stewart when they learn she's leaving GSU is, of course, “What are your retirement plans?” When asked for this article, her answer is immediate and direct: “Sleep. Sleep sleep.” *Really?* “No, not really,” she laughs, “but here's what is really going on: I know I'm going to keep writing. I know I'm going to keep painting.”

For folks who don't know, Stewart is not only an academic writer and creative writer (more on that later) but also an accomplished artist. Her artist persona is Max Stewart, and her work has both competed and sold widely. “The painting has definitely been on the back burner,” she says, “but the work I've been doing I love.” Her current work appears in the 2025 *Trillium*, GSU's literature and art journal. She is also the journal's co-faculty advisor (with Dr. Jonathan Minton). Her painting of *Basilique du Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre*, the cathedral in Paris, appears on page 64 of the *Trillium*—pick up your copy in the Language & Lit office.



Picasso et Max au Sacre Couer et Deux Arches

“I tried and tried and tried to paint it as a realistic painting,” Stewart shakes her head, smiling, and waves away the thought. “So then I remembered how much I loved Picasso's cubist drawing of *Sacré-Cœur*.” She shows off the wallpaper on her phone screen: Picasso's painting. “I saw it when I was in Paris a year and half ago. It was in the Picasso Museum. It's a small museum, and after I saw the exhibits, I had a cup of coffee and a croissant, of course, and then I came back and I kept walking around and coming back. I thought the guards were going to throw me out because I kept standing in front of that picture trying to get the right...you know. Of all the art I've seen in Paris, it probably moved me more than anything. So then I thought, I'll just put a cubist *something* over it.” Stewart pulls out the *Trillium* and locates her painting. “And then one thing seemed like an arch, so I put in one little corner the Arc de Triomphe. And up here [in the other corner] is the Arche de la Défense, which is up in the Défense Region [of Paris].”

Paris is a favorite travel destination for Stewart. Her health issues forced her to cut back on some of her excursions during her latest trip. “I did get to Harry's Bar, which is where Hemingway and others drank. And it doesn't look like it's changed a bit. And the Dior Museum—oh my gosh, it was fabulous. And I ate in their café, and it was wonderful.

“So I'll paint and I'll write and I'll travel some as I'm able.” Stewart is also hoping that retirement will give her an opportunity rest up enough to be involved in the Little Kanawha Theater and Drama Club in the fall. “I could probably run props or stage manage or something. If I can sleep til noon, then I can go to the theater at night.”

Stewart has contributed to GSU's theater scene quite a bit. She wrote three Murder Mystery Dinner Theater plays that were produced as fundraising events over the years. “That was a lot of fun,” Stewart recalls. “The first year, the money we made went to buy the curtains for

the president's Auditorium. I also directed my Christmas play called *Winter Solstice*. That was my second year here.”

Stewart also reflects on the department: “It's been a pleasant place to work. I've got a nice office. The English Department has always been collegial for the most part and get along. I like my colleagues.” Department activities such as the *Trillium*, *Writers Bloc*, the Little Kanawha Reading Series, and the Theater and Drama Club will keep Stewart around the Language and Lit office suite, but what will she miss most about being in the classroom? “The students,” she says. “We have such wonderful students. The 101 and 101S students need a little higher level of attention, but then they're almost always so grateful. And they'll always say, 'I think you really care about your students; I don't know if other people do.' And I'm like, 'Yes, they do; mostly they just don't show it.'”

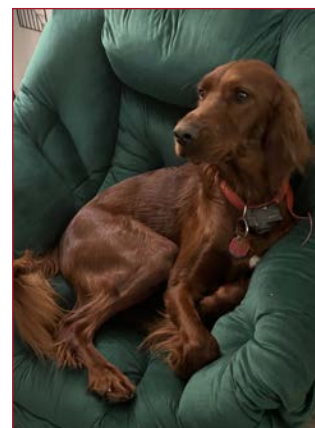
Stewart isn't just an academic scholar and teacher; she's also a creative writer, with a variety of publications to her credit, including a new poem, “My Dear John Letter to Amer Ica,” which folks can read in the 2025 *Trillium*. “It's a really angry poem,” Stewart admits. Recently, she has prioritized writing a Substack blog about her Alzheimer's experience called *Marjie and the Great Grey Mist*. “I thought, I need to write about this,” she says. “So I started writing with what became my first two or three columns on Substack. I know that many people are affected by the dementia diseases, but where to reach them?”

“I had been following Andy Borowitz on Substack since *The New Yorker* fired him. I had followed Heather Cox Richardson for quite a while. One of my MFA professors started her Substack early, but I didn't quite get what it was all about. I'd tried independent blogs, but the publicity work is too hard. I know people who write for *Medium*, but I don't think it's a particularly author friendly platform.

“What I discovered is that Substack is very author friendly. My column is free with voluntary free and paid subscriptions. I occasionally run the ‘Buy me a cup of coffee’ QR code for smaller, one-time contributions. So, unlike Andy Borowitz and Dan Rather, I'm not on Substack to make a fortune or even a living. I'm there to get the word out. And I have connected with caregivers and other people diagnosed with dementia there.

“My home page there explains the purpose—to share my experiences with others who might be affected or who are caregivers for someone with Alzheimer's. I now have 182 subscribers, 13 of whom have paid for the privilege (mostly family and friends, and thank you to them, and the circle is widening.) My first column was on June 25, 2024. I'm now averaging about 175-225 viewers per post. I ‘advertise’ publication dates on Facebook and on LinkedIn, and I have business cards with the address: Marjiestewart.substack.com (no @'s).”

Now, instead of a classroom full of students, Stewart will be spending her days with her husband, Vaughn, and a houseful of dogs: “Clancy is an Irish setter. Jake is a big, white English setter. And Sully is a Brittany mix. They're very sweet. They're all good dogs.”



Clancy in his favorite chair

BEST BOOKS FOR SUMMER READING

A People's History of the United States by Howard Zinn
A Room with a View by E. M. Forster
A Visit from the Goon Squad by Jennifer Egan
Another Appalachia: Coming up Queer and Indian in a Mountain Place by Neema Avashia
Brideshead Revisited by Evelyn Waugh
Broken Country by Clare Leslie Hall
Chain Gang All-Stars by Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah
Colored People: A Memoir by Henry Louis Gates Jr.
Constitution of the United States
Cotton Comes to Harlem by Chester Himes
Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver
Dracula by Bram Stoker (prep for the play to be produced at GSU in the fall!)

FantasticLand: A Novel by Mike Bockoven (graphic violence warning)
Ghost Story by Peter Straub
Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World by Haruki Murakami
Incidents Around the House by Josh Malerman
It by Stephen King
Laura by Vera Caspary
Middlemarch by George Eliot
Mrs. Dalloway by Virginia Woolf
Northanger Abbey by Jane Austen
Nothing to See Here by Kevin Wilson



Once There Were Wolves by Charlotte McConaghy
Only the Dead Know Burbank by Bradford Tatum
Our Infinite Fates by Laura Steven
Pym by Mat Johnson
Rebecca by Daphne du Maurier
Redwall (series) by Brian Jacques
Storming Heaven by Denise Giardina
Strange as This Weather Has Been by Ann Pancake
Sula by Toni Morrison
The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison
The Fortress of Solitude by Jonathan Lethem
The Four Winds by Kristin Hannah
The General Theory of Haunting by Richard Easter
The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store by James McBride
The House of the Spirits by Isabel Allende
The Life We Bury by Allen Eskens
The Night of the Hunter by Davis Grubb
The Quiet Librarian by Allen Eskens
The Savage, Noble Death of Babs Dionne by Ron Currie
The Talented Mr. Ripley by Patricia Highsmith
The Women by Kristin Hannah
Trampoline: An Illustrated Novel by Robert Gipe
Trust: America's Best Chance by Pete Buttigieg
Unbury Carol: A Novel by Josh Malerman
Wild Dark Shore by Charlotte McConaghy

frankenpo — to create a new poetic text by collecting, disaggregating, randomizing, rearranging, recombining, erasing, and reanimating one or more chosen bodies of text, for the purpose of divining or revealing new meanings often at odds with the original texts

Empire Strikes

Citizens of the civilized galaxy, on this day we mark a transition. Billions of helpless factors wind us into blinding, black-gloved sparks. The pain constantly beautiful, omnipotence ripped by a giant jedi abyss. Great ears of the people stolen, deathly half governors, and bureaucracy, that unstoppable depletion. Nation of my gracious physiognomy, once we prospered entire, every fiction time! Our last infrastructure collapses black, we sink wicked, a feeble station, infused by a never-ending crawl. Our regions are semi-darkness, with scarred and weak edges, groans along our peace borders, ripped, scattered, dimly white. Against the reaped verdict, stormtroopers ignite, my dark hood star attacks, lord I. Your unbearable boy emperor—my force fictitious flashes out, unstoppable bleed. My carnage grown from exaggerated disrepair. Seven-foot-tall in the well of a mob. Towards a cold room, our body staggers.

— Kenji C. Liu



“Empire Strikes” is a frankenpo of Emperor Palpatine’s speech to the Galactic Senate (*Star Wars Ep 3 – Revenge of the Sith*) + POTUS 45’s inaugural speech + selected dialogue involving the Emperor from *Star Wars Ep 4-6*. Read more of Liu’s “frankenpo” in his book *Monsters I Have Been*: <https://www.amazon.com/Monsters-Have-Been-Kenji-Liu/dp/1938584988>

HILLS VS. ROUTES: THE BATTLE FOR EASIER CAMPUS NAVIGATION

Contributed by Chyna Nguyen, English Major

Glenville State University campus is positioned on a mountain, making walking around campus a difficult task for most. It is well-known throughout the student body, staff members, and even visitors that this campus is not an easy one to traverse. Whether you're heading to class, grabbing food at the Mollohan, or just trying to get from one place to another, the steep terrain can be a challenge.

However, there are two primary ways to navigate the campus: the hills and the routes. While the hills offer the advantage of speed and efficiency, they can be physically demanding and difficult for those with mobility challenges. On the other hand, the campus's network of routes, though not widely known or commonly used, provides a more accessible and energy-conserving alternative. These routes are generally more beneficial for accessibility, time efficiency, and conserving energy, especially when you need to get places quickly and efficiently.

The first to be addressed is going to be the hill side of the spectrum. The majority of the hill is a straight walk up aside from the buildings and the staircases that come up every now and then. But even with all of this, the hills provide some good benefits to use rather than the routes. The first advantage of using the hill is that for much of it, there are handrails which are helpful when it comes to catching oneself in case of tripping or falling. They can also help you pull yourself up with your upper body when your legs are tired.

Another benefit of using the hill is physical exercise. While it may seem daunting, walking the hill is great exercise for your lower body, back, and core. The last advantage to using the hill over using the routes would be the scenic side of campus. Although walking up and down the hill can be difficult, there is almost always a good view to see when you reach the top.

While there are some ups to using the hills, there are also downs. The first point is for those who have mobility issues. The campus is a challenge for those with disabilities or limited mobility. While the campus has Americans with Disability Act accommodations such as automatic doors, motion-sensor lights, and elevators, the hills themselves cannot be outfitted that way. Even where railings exist, they are often rusty, wobbly, or just plain icy or wet in the weather. The handrails around Goodwin Hall have been reported as a particular example.

And since we mentioned it, the weather. In Glenville, as in Morton Salt shakers, when it rains, it pours. In the winter, snow follows suit and ice follows snow. All of this makes the campus difficult to walk. Everything becomes slippery, especially sidewalks and staircases. Some of this is caused by drainage problems, some by late maintenance, and some by the plain fact that it is winter and rain, snow, and ice are dangerous.

Even in good weather, the physically fit members of the campus community struggle some with the steep surfaces. For those with limited mobility or disabilities, it is a much bigger struggle. We've all seen people on campus using canes, crutches, walkers, wheelchairs and electric carts. Even temporary disabilities like athletic injuries create a barrier and a burden. Struggling up and down the hills and stairways on campus is draining physically and emotionally. Those people have more trouble getting to and from class on time, accessing the food service, and participating in activities. The unreliability of the campus elevators is no help either.

So, you ask, what is the difference between the hills and the routes? The hills are simply heading straight up the roads and sidewalks, around the buildings, and to your destination. But if you're clever and want to avoid some of the strain, there are routes you can take:

- ◆ From Goodwin to the Mollohan, you can take the third floor exit from the dorm. That puts you on the fitness level of the Mollohan. From there, you can either go in the building and take the stairs, or take the walk around to the second level entrance.
- ◆ From AB to the Mollohan, take the AB/LBH elevator to the third floor. Follow the now-deserted hallway around to the exit by the cemetery. Turn left and pass the Clark Hall lawn. From there, you can choose to walk up the hill and around past the president's house or take the staircase down behind the Science Hall.
- ◆ From the Mollohan to the Fine Arts Building, you have to put your faith in the shuttle.
- ◆ To get the RFK Library, we recommend hitchhiking with a friend who owns a car.

MORE
ART
BY
MAX
STEWART

(right)
Cezanne et Max au Sacre Couer

(below)
sous les pavés, la plage



COMING TO THE GSU STAGE HALLOWEEN 2025

DRACULA:

THE CASE OF THE SILVER SCREAM

FROM A CONCEPT BY DAVID GRAPES
ADAPTED FOR THE STAGE BY ROBERT NEBLETT AND DAVID GRAPES



Auditions August 25-28 President's Auditorium
Performances Oct 31, Nov 1, 7, 8 Fine Arts

For information contact Jennifer Wenner - jennifer.wenner@glenville.edu

Contributed by Jennifer Wenner, Senior Lecturer of Communications

A 1948 film studio is filming their latest monster movie on location in the halls of the Whitby Sanitarium. The lead actress, Lorna Mills, has disappeared. Her replacement, Lucy Murray, hires hard-boiled PI Abe Van Helsing to find out what happened to Lorna, and investigate the odd events happening at the sanitarium. Director Jonathan Harker needs money for the film and asks European immigrant Count Dracula to invest. Van Helsing is reluctant to investigate, but the case has ties to another case he investigated. Will he solve the mystery? Finding out is going to suck.

Glenville's Little Kanawha Theater and Drama Club presents *Dracula: The Case of the Silver Scream*, a play by David Grapes, just in time to celebrate Halloween 2025.

Plan ahead! Auditions will take place August 25-28 in the President's Auditorium. Performances are October 31 and November 1, 7, 8 in the Fine Arts auditorium.

15 roles are available: 7 female, 6 male, and 2 unspecified. The 5 lead roles are mentioned in the synopsis above. There are also options on several non-speaking roles, or screaming roles, if you wish.

You can get involved in non-acting positions as well because help with many other elements of the production is always welcome.

Contact jennifer.wenner@glenville.edu for more information.

Hey kids, this ISN'T your grandpa's Dracula!



WEIRD QUESTION *of the* WEEK

If you were an ice cream flavor, what would Ben & Jerry call you?

Joshua Berke - Admin of Justice (CRJU) Major
"No Eye Contact Crunch"

Trysta McKenzie - Admin of Justice (CRJU) Major
"Confetti Fun Cake or Butter Pecan Confusion"

Sunday Collins - Science Major
"Fizzy-Grape Grasshopper Pop or Screaming Strawberry Cicada Cone"

Ben Kilgore - Exercise Science (HHP) Major
"Always Tired Vanilla"

Michael Vozniak - Assistant Professor of English
"Paw Paw Pepperoni Roll"

Emma King - Health Promotion (HHP) Major
"Sweet Cherry"

Nichole Flowers - Criminal Justice Major
"Cozy Book Date"

Marjorie Stewart - Professor of English
"Mango to the Max"

Jennifer Wenner
Senior Lecturer of Communications
"Jammin' Jenny Wenny Woo Who"



Larry Baker - Professor of Physical Science
"I believe Ben & Jerry would call me 'Americone Dream' – Vanilla Ice Cream with Fudge-Covered Waffle Cone Pieces & a Caramel Swirl. This is because, if Ben & Jerry had investigated my career, it is obvious I have lived the 'American Dream.' As a professor, at this wonderful institution, helping others reach their dream has been an honor and one of my dreams."

Jonathan Minton - Professor of English
"Minty Fresh - that was given to me by Nancy Zane back in the day."

James (J.D.) Carpenter - Assistant Professor of Business
"Tenure Tracked & Triple Stacked": A burnt espresso base (because sleep is for adjuncts), overloaded with crunch-time caramel, passive-aggressive dark chocolate chips, and red-ink raspberry swirls. Comes with a tiny spoon and an existential crisis."

Amanda Chapman - Associate Professor of English
"Pretty Vanilla if We're Being Honest"

Jason P. Barr - Associate Professor of Music
"Jason's Jazzy Ginger Snap Crunch (get it? Because I'm a ginger!!)"

