

WRITERS BLOC

GLENVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

v17 n6 / 15 NOVEMBER 2025

ATTENTION ARTISTS & WRITERS



Please note some deadlines: The *Trillium* is now seeking submissions of prose and poetry through November 30, and *Trillium* Art Show entries will be accepted through December 5. Special thanks to our student contributors. Keep those mini essays coming! Language & Lit is now on Facebook and Instagram. Check us out: @gsu_languageandlit



SEND WRITERS BLOC SUBMISSIONS TO

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

CONTACT FACULTY AT
www.glenville.edu/departments/language-literature

Banner photo by Jason Gish - Rumpus photo by Scott O'Neil

A NEW HELPING HAND

The Department of Language and Literature is pleased to welcome Kimberly Stump as the newest member of our team. As the Administrative Assistant to our department, Kimberly will provide support for our academics and activities.

Kimberly told us, "When I was given the opportunity to work at Glenville State University, I was absolutely over the moon. For a long time, I've wanted to work in an office environment, as my previous experience was primarily in CNA work, especially hospice care—so this has been a wonderful and refreshing change of pace. I'm truly excited to be part of GSU, knowing that our work contributes to shaping others into successful adults and future leaders."

We asked Kimberly what she likes to do in her free time, and she told us, "When I'm not spending time with my husband and family, I love being with my nieces and nephews and helping out at our local Fire Department. My dad has been a member there for over 40 years—longer than I've been alive—so it's something that's always been close to my heart."

And because we are who we are, after all, we had to ask Kimberly, "If you could have coffee with any writer, who would you choose?" Kimberly's response: "I would choose Nicholas Sparks. I've always been a sucker for his books! Unfortunately, with my previous work schedule, I didn't have much time to read, but I'm looking forward to getting back into it and reconnecting with stories that inspire and move people."

We're very happy to have Kimberly on board with us.



NAMELESS NO MORE



The department would like to thank everyone who suggested names for the Assquatch, our new office mascot. It will now be known as Rumpus.

Over the past week, Rumpus has been up to mischief. Mike Vozniak arrived one morning to find his pens arranged on his desk so as to spell out the word GROOVY. Jennifer Wenner's travel mug appeared to have been filled with Milk Duds and M&Ms. And someone—presumably Rumpus—keeps rearranging the magnetic poetry on the break room fridge into surprisingly decent haikus. On Tuesday, the entire department found their office nameplates decorated with glitter. Department Chair Amanda Chapman was not amused—until she discovered a perfectly formatted bibliography had appeared on her desk, completing her current article. In addition, the coffee always appears freshly made. Rumpus's motives remain unclear, but department morale has never been higher.

Spellbound

The night is darkening round me,
The wild winds coldly blow;
But a tyrant spell has bound me
And I cannot, cannot go.
The giant trees are bending
Their bare boughs weighed with snow.
And the storm is fast descending,
And yet I cannot go.
Clouds beyond clouds above me,
Wastes beyond wastes below;
But nothing drear can move me;
I will not, cannot go.

— Emily Brontë

EXPIRATION DATE

Contributed by Karma Towner, Criminal Justice Major

Sometimes, when we focus so much on what we don't have that we fail to appreciate what we do. Letting our desires blind us is a clear theme in the short story "The Ice Cutter's Daughter and Her Looking Glass" by Nadia Born. Life is about making sacrifices, but what are you willing to give up for your dreams?

I spend a lot of time in my life yearning, which sounds kind of funny, but it's true. I think a lot of people are the same. Why be content when there is such a vast world of things we don't have? Wanting better for yourself isn't a crime, but you should still be able to appreciate what you do have. Of course, I would love a nicer car or a bigger house, but I also know how to appreciate the roof over my head and the food in my fridge. In Born's story, the ice cutter's daughter "wonders if dreams have an expiration date," and I would argue they do. While I dream of a nicer car or bigger house, I also realize that if I am always chasing after what's next, I miss out on appreciating what I have.

Ultimately, the story of the ice cutter's daughter reads as a warning. We must be careful when chasing our desires, so we don't lose parts of ourselves along the way. Dreaming big is important but so is remembering who we are and what we already have. Sometimes it's better to hold on to what we have and instead ask ourselves what price we are willing to pay for what we don't.

Read the story here:

<https://www.flashfictiononline.com/article/the-ice-cutters-daughter-and-her-looking-glass/>

GSU THEATER NEWS

Contributed by Jennifer Wenner, Theater and Drama Club Director

The Little Kanawha Theater and Drama Club would like to thank everyone who supported our play, *Dracula: The Case of the Silver Scream*. We had a lot of fun doing it, and hope you enjoyed it as well.

We have made plans for upcoming shows. February 2026 we plan to perform a play by John Cariani (Licensing pending). It will be a play of short vignettes about love, with a cast of up to 20 people. Off book. Auditions in January.

April 2026 we will do some Shakespeare. *Macbeth* for those who don't buy into curses (more on this later). Cast up to 20 people. Auditions will also be in January, because . . . Shakespeare.

Fall of 2026, with the help of Fine Arts, we will do a Broadway musical review. Auditions in fall, but feel free to contact Jennifer Wenner if you have questions.

While we have members of the Theater and Drama Club participating, we also accept newcomers. And we look forward to meeting you.

Contact Jennifer.Wenner@glenville.edu for more information about joining the club or participating in non-acting positions or as a club visitor.

 A colorful, stylized illustration for a call for artists. It features a stage with dark curtains and a blue wall with framed pictures. The stage is framed by large, yellow, starburst-like shapes. The text "CALL for ARTISTS" is written in large, yellow, bubbly letters across the top. In the bottom right corner, there is a QR code.

The Trillium, GSU's literary and arts journal, is now accepting art submissions for its 2026 issue! All GSU students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members are invited to submit their visual art through the following form:

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 5th, 2025

For more information, contact Autumn Moyers, the Trillium arts editor, at moyers.autumnr@gsu.glenville.edu.

WEIRD QUESTION of the WEEK

It's that time of year when we reach for a mug of hot cider or pumpkin spice latte or salted peanut butter hot chocolate (this editor's personal favorite), so we asked, "Roughly, how many mugs would you say you own, and how many do you actually use regularly? Any favorites?"

Alex Rogerson - Biology Major

"I only have one mug, but I use that thing religiously. To me, it's not just another mug—it's the one I received at my bar mitzvah from my Nonny before she passed away. It has a doodle of me and her sitting and watching TV while she's knitting, and the mug came from her pottery hobby. I'd say that was one of the best gifts I've ever received."

Kimberly Stump - Administrative Assistant

"I own 2 mugs and use them at least once a week. I don't have any favorites."

Lisa Eagle - Printing Service Specialist

"Own roughly 16 mugs, use regularly 5 mugs."

Megan Moats - Teacher/Counselor, SSS

"Mugs are my FAVORITE thing to collect! I try to get one for every place I visit...and I don't even drink coffee! I'd say I have roughly 30 or so, but I've recently tried to cut back. However, my favorite one is a Rae Dunn mug that says 'Cat Mom' as that is my proudest title!"



Minnie approves of Megan's mug.

Jennifer Wenner - Senior Lecturer of Communications

"117. Roughly. I use my Eeyore mug the most, or one of seven giant thermal cups to go."

Amanda Chapman - Associate Professor of English

"So we own a whole lot of mugs, but many of them are holiday-specific, so they only get used for part of the year—but they do get used! My favorite mug gets used every day (except when the holiday mugs enter the rotation); it's a piece of handmade pottery, blue with brown accents."



Mike Vozniak - Assistant Professor of English

"I have 24 mugs in my house! I seem to have inherited mugs throughout my life. I'd say I only use about 16 regularly. So far, this is my favorite mug! This is Coco! She arrived on our doorstep three years ago. She loves to sit under the Christmas tree!"



Peyton Romig - Business Major

"After counting how many of my cups/mugs could hold a hot beverage, I concluded I have 72. This includes trading inks mugs and travel mugs, i.e. Stanleys, owlals, and some other various metal cups."

Journie Curtis - BA-Undeclared

"I have like over 25 mugs just between me and my parents."

Shelly A. Haynes - Associate Professor of Education

"Probably 20, and my favorite is a plain red mug. But it's skinnier than most, so whatever I put in it is stronger ;-)"

Alyssa Hall - Field Forensics (CRJU) Major

"I have my brown and black mug because it's basic and my go-to or my pink Disney cup because I always have soda or water in it or iced coffee."

Schuyler Chapman - Associate Professor of English

"Personally, I own three functioning mugs, which I use regularly, as well as three mugs that I use to store things (change, pens, sundries). But my favorite mug ever has a broken handle; I still have it sitting on a bookshelf though!"



Scott O'Neil - Assistant Professor English

"As to the number, I couldn't even hope to guess. I literally bought a large piece of cabinet furniture dedicated solely to coffee mug and supplies storage. My current daily drinker (far left) is a great mug given to me by my good friend Hilarie. My academic specialty is stage fools, and this mug has a skeleton fool juggling coffee beans, so it's totally on-brand. I also have an "advisee mug club" with custom mugs for my advisees to use for coffee during advising sessions. When they graduate, they get to take their mug home!"



Fill Your Mug

POM Cider

16 ounces 100% pomegranate juice
 2 cups water
 1/2 cup brown sugar
 3 cinnamon sticks
 2 star anise
 1 to 2 cardamom pods
 1 orange, freshly juiced (about 1/2 cup)
 orange rind, from the orange above
 for serving: whipped cream



Jennifer Wenner's mug

Bring everything to a boil in a pan, then reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 15 minutes. Strain and serve in mugs with whipped cream. This recipe makes four servings.

Salted Peanut Butter Hot Chocolate

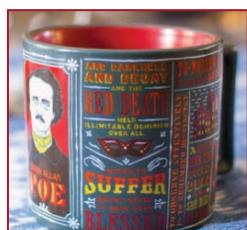
1/2 cup water
 2 cups milk (coconut milk for dairy free)
 1 cup half and half or heavy cream (coconut milk/cream for dairy free)
 3 tablespoons sugar
 2 tablespoons cocoa powder
 8 ounces high-quality dark chocolate, chopped
 1/3 cup peanut butter
 1/4 teaspoon flaked sea salt, plus more for topping
 for serving: mini marshmallows

Heat water, milk, and cream in a pan over low heat. Whisk in sugar and cocoa until dissolved. Stir in chocolate, peanut butter, and sea salt.

Top with peanut butter whipped cream:
 Whip together 1 cup cold heavy cream (coconut cream for dairy free) and 2 tablespoons creamy peanut butter.
 This recipe makes four good-sized servings.

Pumpkin Spice Latte

2 Tbsp. pumpkin puree
 1 Tbsp. brown sugar
 1 Tbsp. granulated sugar
 1/2 tsp. pumpkin pie spice
 1 Tbsp. water
 1 cup whole milk
 2 tsp. vanilla extract
 1/4 cup hot espresso or strongly brewed coffee
 For serving: whipped cream and more pumpkin pie spice



Melissa Gish's only mug

Heat first five ingredients, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Add milk and vanilla and whisk until smooth. Simmer 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat and pour into a tightly covered heat-resistant container and shake the heck out of it to make the milk foamy.

Fill the mug with coffee and top with the foamy milk mixture. Top with whipped cream and a sprinkle of pumpkin pie spice. This recipe makes a single serving.

Do People Still Read?

Contributed by Blake Herron, Admin of Justice (CRJU) & Management Major

A May 2025 article by Joel J. Miller called "The Quiet Collapse of Reading—and the Only Real Solution" is about how people are not reading novels like they used to. Miller states "In 2012, about 55 percent said they read at least one book in the past year. One decade later, and that number had dropped downward by six points to about 49 percent. Fiction in particular declined seven points in the same period: 45 percent in 2012, down to 38 percent in 2022." This is not surprising to me at all. Social media, radio news broadcasting, and podcasts are just a few of the reasons I think people are reading less.

Overall, statistics show that women read more than men. Miller explains that "one trend has remained constant: Depending on how you round the numbers, women maintain a 19-20 point lead over men. They had that lead in 2012 and held it over the intervening decade." This may have something to do with the stereotypical notion that men should be more physically active and exercise their bodies, rather than their minds. Nonetheless, the percentage of both men and women who read has declined, and will likely continue to trend downward.

Personally, I do not read unless I have to. I would much rather listen to a book or story instead of sitting down and reading. I think this is because my brain is wired in a way that I literally have the need to multitask. If I were to sit down and read a novel, I would retain less information about the book than I would if I were to listen to it while completing another task, such as chores. I often become too consumed with things that I need to get done and that I should be doing instead of taking the time to read. I think that just because people are not buying paperback books does not mean people are not reading in other ways, such as audiobooks.

Read Miller's article here: <https://www.millersbookreview.com/p/quiet-collapse-of-reading-and-the-only-real-solution>

Is Music Hurting the Algorithm?

Contributed by Tatem, Brown, Music Education Major

In his thought-provoking Substack essay titled "Virtuosos in the Age of Instagram," Jacob Garchik explores how the concept of musical virtuosity has shifted in the digital era. He contrasts the towering legacies of musicians like Art Tatum and John Coltrane with today's algorithm and Instagram driven culture. The article invites us to ask what does it mean to be a virtuoso in a world where attention is fragmented like currency and content is consumable in seconds. This article was super interesting because music and social media are one in the same. Whether it's someone dancing or someone talking with music in the background they are one in the same at this point in time. But at the same time, as the article says, "We've replaced virtuosity with visibility, and in doing so, we risk confusing what is popular for what is profound." This is super interesting to me because people often mistake fame or visibility for true talent and mastery. Garchik is warning that likes and followers become the main measure of success. This article talks about how music can be a good thing for places like Instagram and also a bad thing for some people because in the end, if you love music or any craft, how can you preserve depth when your medium rewards instantly? How do you build a legacy when the platform prioritizes clicks? In this age of algorithmic applause, let us remember that virtuosity is still about substance not just surface.

Read Garchik's article here: <https://jacobgarchik.substack.com/p/virtuosos-in-the-age-of-instagram/comments>