

# WRITERS BLOC

GLENVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE  
V18 N5 / 1 APRIL 2026

## SPRINGTIME FUN

Spring is here, and so is a fresh issue of *Writers Bloc*, packed with things to look forward to. We're shining the spotlight on the Little Kanawha Reading Series spring events. We're also joining in on a little fun for National Pet Day. Pets hold a special place in our hearts, and GSU's community is no exception. From dogs and cats to hedgehogs, rabbits, and reptiles, we're celebrating our four-legged friends who make our lives a little brighter. We hope you enjoy this issue!

In our next issue, we'll celebrate National Poetry Month with an "exquisite corpse," a community-based poetry activity. We'll select GSU students, faculty, and staff at random to participate!

## LKRS GUEST FOR APRIL

Join us on **Thursday, April 9, 2026, at 4:00 p.m.** in the Robert F. Kidd Library for the Little Kanawha Reading Series. The LKRS is pleased to host **Davis Shoulders**, who comes to us all the way from Johnson City, Tennessee. Shoulders is a director and worker-owner of Atlas Books, an independent and cooperatively owned bookstore. They have served as the Events Organizer for Union Ave Books in Knoxville, Tennessee since 2018. Davis first got started in bookselling on the events team at Politics & Prose Bookstore in Washington, DC and its partnership with the local Busboys & Poets restaurant. They love reading memoir essay collections.

Atlas Books is a cooperatively owned bookstore that provides something unique to the region's literary scene. It is located on Main Street in Johnson City, Tennessee, inside The Generalist, a multi-vendor space. Atlas offers a curated selection spanning everything from regional Appalachian literature to fiction, poetry, graphic novels, and even books for kids.

What sets Atlas apart is its cooperative model, meaning the store is community-rooted by design, prioritizing local voices and independent publishing over corporate retail. The bookstore also hosts community events such as its popular "Books & Brews" monthly book club, making it a gathering place for readers of all kinds.

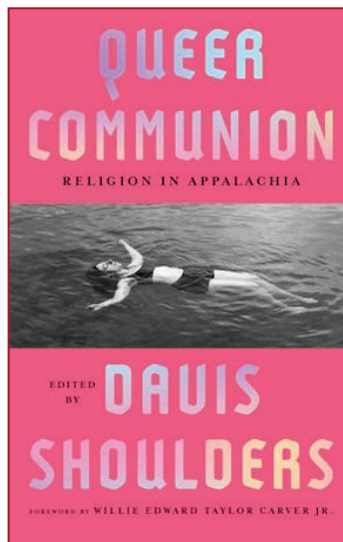
In addition to his dedication to Atlas, Shoulders is the editor of the book *Queer Communion: Religion in Appalachia*, a collection of twelve essays, poems, and stories that follows and fractures the expectations surrounding LGBTQIA+ Appalachians and their religious beliefs.

Gathered by Shoulders, the pieces in the book delve into themes of chosen family, loss, congregation, and alternative expressions of faith. Set against the backdrop of Christian cultural mores and a region considered to be deeply pious, the pieces in this book offer diverse perspectives on religion, queerness, and growth.

*Queer Communion* explores everything from the joy and excitement of worship to the complexities of navigating one's queerness and spiritual convictions in oppressive environments. The authors highlight their personal journeys, illuminating the ways in which folks find spirituality while confronting bigotry, loneliness, and fear. Davis explained that *Queer Communion* represents an act of creation, reclaiming and redefining faith in the face of changing beliefs and societal pressures. Shoulders will read selections from the book at the April 9 LKRS event. We hope you'll join us!

All of the Little Kanawha Reading Series events are FREE and open to the public. If you can't make it to the reading in person, you can watch the live stream or catch the video later on the GSU YouTube channel: <https://qrco.de/gsuyoutube>

If you'd like to check out the books available at Atlas, you can shop online at <https://bookshop.org/shop/atlasbooks>



### SEND WRITERS BLOC SUBMISSIONS TO

[melissa.gish@glennville.edu](mailto:melissa.gish@glennville.edu)

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

### CONTACT FACULTY AT

[www.glennville.edu/departments/language-literature](http://www.glennville.edu/departments/language-literature)

Glennville State University Department of Language & Literature,  
Appalachian Studies Program, and the Robert F. Kidd Library

# Little Kanawha Reading Series

## FUNDRAISING SILENT AUCTION

### Celebrate National Pet Day April 11

### Robert F. Kidd Library

Bidding open April 6 to Apr. 10 @ 3 p.m.



#### Original Pet Portrait

Bid on a handpainted portrait of your pet! You supply the photograph of your pet and the artist will paint an original oil painting for you. This auction is for an 8 x 10 inch painting ready for you to frame. The artist is Anne Marie Propst, a professional pet artist for many years. She has won many accolades and has been highlighted in several art magazines.



#### Handmade Pet/Lap Quilts

Choose from a selection of machine washable cotton quilts in a variety of colors, styles, and sizes. Perfect for your pet (or yourself). Give the gift of cozy comfort with a colorful quilt handmade by Professor Gish in the Department of Language and Literature.



#### Kids, Read with Your Pet

Do you have kids in elementary or middle school? Younger siblings? Maybe you're an education major wanting to build a classroom library. Promote kids' reading. Bid on a variety of fun, educational books on a variety of topics, from wildlife to fantasy to special forces. Perfect for young readers.  
Written by  
Professor Gish

**Celebrate Pets and  
Support the Arts!**

**Come Bid on Great Gifts  
for Pets and People!**

**All Proceeds Support the Little Kanawha Reading Series**

*The Little Kanawha Reading Series provides a showcase for a diversity of literary forms and voices in order to acknowledge and enrich the cultural heritage of Appalachia and the communities around the Little Kanawha River.*

## DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES

### **Dr. Amanda Chapman to Present Research on Victorian Children's Literature at Midwest Conference**

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Amanda Chapman will present her research at the Midwest Victorian Studies Association Conference in Ohio this April. Her presentation, titled "The 'depths of metaphysics': The Underground Self and the Child in Harriet Mozley's *The Fairy Bower*," explores a fascinating transition in how Victorian society viewed childhood consciousness.

Dr. Chapman's talk examines a central anxiety in nineteenth-century children's literature: the fear that reading might make children "sadly self-conscious," as critic E. M. Field warned in 1891. This concern marked a significant departure from eighteenth-century educational philosophy, when figures like John Locke and Sarah Trimmer had actively encouraged self-examination and reflection in young readers.

At the heart of Dr. Chapman's presentation is Harriet Mozley's 1841 novel *The Fairy Bower*, which captures this cultural shift in progress. The novel's protagonist, Grace, experiences moments reminiscent of Alice's metaphysical wanderings in Wonderland, puzzling over questions of identity and selfhood. Yet Mozley's text pulls in two directions at once: sometimes warning that such "depths of metaphysics" are dangerous territory for children, while at other times approving of Grace's careful self-reflection in the tradition of Maria Edgeworth's rational young heroines.

Dr. Chapman argues that this tension reveals *The Fairy Bower* as a transitional work, bridging the gap between the self-aware, reflective children of late-eighteenth-century domestic fiction and the unself-conscious "children of nature" championed by Romantic poets like Wordsworth and Coleridge. This Romantic paradigm would ultimately shape the canon of Victorian children's literature's Golden Age.

The presentation promises to shed new light on how changing concepts of childhood consciousness influenced the development of children's literature during a pivotal period in the genre's history.

## "AI IS GOOD AT DULL"

Contributed by Elizabeth Oldaker, BA Undeclared

An article by Anne Rooney called "Prove You are Not a Robot" is about the struggles of being a writer in this day and age where the usage of artificial intelligence (AI) is popularized. In the article, the author describes being a nonfiction writer and tells how scary it is that AI is completely changing the game in the sense that it can make covers, outlines, or even write a book entirely with just one click of a button. AI is absolutely destroying creativity, imagination, and critical thinking skills. Worst of all, AI is taking jobs from the visionaries and writers that pour their heart and soul into these publications, people who use writing as their form of self-expression, and whose lives revolve around their work. In the article Rooney states, "AI is good at dull" and then goes on to note that AI "can write a book, but the book will not be fun to read." I could not agree with this statement more because every enjoyable book is filled with life. Life and emotion are the key components to writing anything worth reading, and those are two things that artificial intelligence cannot give us. Rooney also admits that the fear of losing her job to AI pushes her to write more imaginative and creative works, but we should not have to live in fear that our creativity is going to be taken away or silenced. This is such a sad and frustrating time. To see all of the negative changes in this world and for them to be seen as "advancements" makes me feel a kind of dread for the future.

Read the blog post on An Awfully Big Blog Adventure here:

[awfullybigblogadventure.blogspot.com/2025/01/prove-you-are-not-robot-anne-rooney.html](http://awfullybigblogadventure.blogspot.com/2025/01/prove-you-are-not-robot-anne-rooney.html)

ChatGPT attempted to tell a joke:

*Why did the AI write a book?*

*Because it wanted to make its "points" without ever losing its train of thought . . . or its wi-fi!*

I don't know about you, but I think this is pretty dull.

## THEATRE & DRAMA CLUB NEWS

The Little Kanawha Theatre and Drama Club invites you to their production of ***Love/Sick on April 23 and 24*** at 7:00 p.m. in the Fine Arts Auditorium.

The play was written by John Cariani, an actor and playwright originally from Maine who now lives in the Bronx. He has appeared on TV's *Law and Order* and *Numb3rs*. *Love/Sick* was made into a movie in Mexico called *Enfermo Amor*.

*Love/Sick* is a one-act, multiple cycle play about love and loss—but mostly loss. Each cycle of the play has its own arc and tells the story of a couple at a crossroads in their relationship. Since each relationship is more advanced than the previous relationship, a larger arc emerges, and the individual cycles work together to create a satisfying whole—one that chronicles the life cycle of a typical relationship from meeting through divorce . . . and afterwards. Full of imperfect lovers and dreamers, *Love/Sick* is an unromantic comedy for the romantic in everyone.

We hope you will support theater at GSU by coming out to see *Love/Sick*. And in the fall, we will be producing Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

## ARTIST DONATES HER SKILLS

As part of the Little Kanawha Reading Series Fundraising Silent Auction, painter Anne Marie Propst will be donating an original oil painting to the lucky winner of the "Pet Portrait" auction item. As a one-of-a-kind painting, Propst's work is sure to be valued not only by the winning pet owner but by admirers of art for generations to come. Don't miss your opportunity to have your pet immortalized in art.

Propst is a North Carolina artist who has never met an art supply she didn't love. She primarily paints in oils but also enjoys gouache and acrylics. Subject matter varies from tonal landscapes to still life and portraits. Pet portraits are popular requests. You can view her gallery of art at <https://www.annemariepropst.com>

Other ways to connect with Propst and her artwork:

<https://artannemariepropst.blogspot.com>

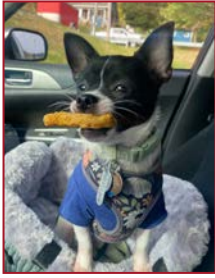
<https://www.facebook.com/artannepropst>

Instagram: @propstannemarie

The silent auction will take place in the Robert F. Kidd Library from Monday, April 6 through Friday, April 10. Bidding closes at 3 pm.



# CELEBRATE PETS IN OUR GSU COMMUNITY



## Ashley Crook

*Early (PreK-K)/Elementary (K-6)  
Education/SPED Major*

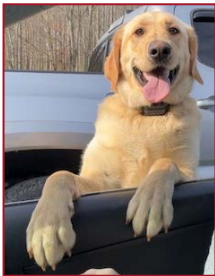
"This is Nova. She is a chihuahua; she's one year old. An interesting thing about her is that she was the runt of the litter, so she had to be bottle fed."



## Ammar Maxwell

*Business Major*

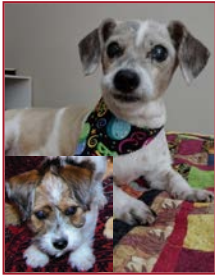
"This is my dog; her name is Star, and she is a rottweiler mixed with a German Shepherd. She is 11 years old. One fun fact about her is she loves to play in the snow."



## Kaytie Sargent

*Elementary Education (K-6) Major*

"This is Sadie. Sadie is a one-year-old lab retriever mix. She just recently had a birthday on March 12. Sadie loves to eat everybody's socks."



## Melissa Gish

*Associate Professor of English*

"This is Juno; she's a piebald wire-haired dachshund. She celebrated her 18th birthday this month. In her lifetime, she has road-tripped to 12 U.S. states west of the Mississippi and 11 states on the east side."



## Kaitlyn West

*Business Major*

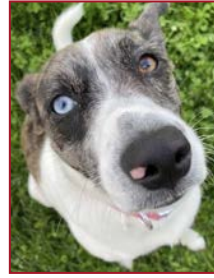
"Biscuit is a domestic shorthair cat; she is about three. I am the only person who can pet her, and it's only been done a handful of times. She HATES touch, and is scared of literally everything."



## Mary Brinker

*Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit*

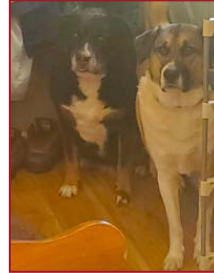
"This is my dog, Ozzie. He is about five years old. Ozzie loves to play fetch and follow the tractor when we are doing farm work."



## Bella Russell

*Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit*

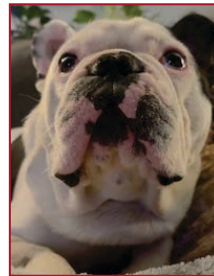
"This is Athena, she is now six years old. She is an Australian Shepherd mixed with Schnauzer. She has two different colored eyes, and she was the runt of her litter."



## Lloyd Bone

*Associate Professor of Music, Marching Band Director*

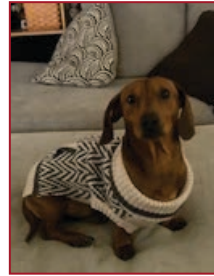
"We have three dogs (Molly, Luna and Scout). This is Luna and Scout. Luna is a complete sweetie pie and loves to have her belly scratched from anyone. Scout is a brat! For example, just yesterday someone got to our bag of dinner rolls and ate all eight of them that were left!"



## Logan Neil

*Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit*

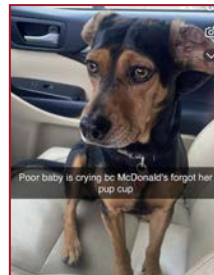
"Stitch is a French Bulldog. His favorite thing to do is pretend to be a French Bulldog."



## Brogann Henry

*Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit*

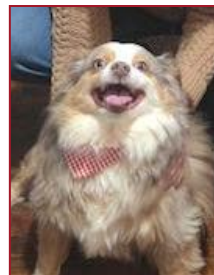
"This is my five-year-old wiener dog Cash. A fun fact is that he loves to play with sticks that are way bigger than him."



## Fiona VanMatre

*Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit*

"This is Lulu, and I have no clue how old she is. We found her on the side of the road with a broken leg and took her in."



## Aimee Huddleston

*Regents Bachelor of Arts*

"This is Mitzi, my nine-year-old miniature Australian Shepherd. She's the dog I didn't want, but I can't imagine my life without her now."

## CELEBRATE NATIONAL PET DAY WITH A VARIETY OF INTERESTING MEDIA

*Contributed by Jodee Frederick, General Studies*

An article on the *Longreads* website called “Big Love” tells the story of Carol Buckley and her elephant Tarra. It’s about their bond and how humans can care for animals in a way that’s larger than just ownership of them. It made me think about how we treat animals and whether everyone understands that they have feelings.

Some people don’t believe that animals feel emotions, but that ignores the relationships that can exist between humans and animals. In the article, the author says, “Anyone who has ever had a beloved pet can tell you that the relationship between an animal and its owner is special. Pets aren’t property in the way a house, a car, or a pair of shoes is. Some people love their animals in ways that defy logic. They don’t think of them as things; they think of them as family.” I completely agree with this. People can care for animals in ways that go far beyond ownership. Ownership obviously still plays a big role in it, but what matters is that animals clearly have feelings and are capable of forming connections similar to how we do. Many animals can respond to attention, comfort, grief, and joy. They remember people and places. They make routines, and they look for company when they feel alone. Calling that “projection” shuts down a kind of knowing that comes from time with an animal. That feels flat to me.

Spending time with a pet shows us just how much they notice and remember things, and that alone shows they are more than just things we own. They have their own ways of understanding the world, even if it isn’t as complex as ours. They respond in ways that show they can feel and react to their surroundings.

You can read the article here:

<https://longreads.com/2023/03/08/big-love-sanctuary-elephant-atavist-magazine>

A video on the TED website called “Why are There So Many Different Kinds of Dogs?” is about the relationship between genetics, environment, and behavior in domestic dogs. One of the most fascinating breeds to me is the border collie, which is famous for its herding skills. These dogs provide a good example to help us understand how certain behaviors are inherited and how instincts guide the actions of dogs.

Border collies are known for how well they respond to human direction. They also fit into the pattern described in the TED video, where “ten major groups emerged that roughly aligned with the lineage’s historic working role— from pointing and flushing to scent-tracking and retrieving” (Morrill Pirovich). Putting border collies into that group explains why the breed shows a common pattern: people selected dogs that fit a job, and those dogs kept passing on traits useful for that job. Border collies are regularly chosen for herding and related work.

While genes matter for border collies, they don’t determine behavior on their own. Yes, they set tendencies, but how those tendencies play out depends on other things, such as what a dog experiences early on in its life, its daily situations, how people around it behave, and its temperament. Even though the breed carries traits that make herding easier, no two dogs act exactly the same in every situation. Behavior is a mix of inherited patterns and the context a dog lives in. The breed of a dog gives a guide to what a dog is likely to do, but the way a dog actually behaves depends on its own experiences and personality.

You can watch the video here:

[www.ted.com/talks/kathleen\\_morrill\\_pirovich\\_why\\_are\\_there\\_so\\_many\\_different\\_kinds\\_of\\_dogs](http://www.ted.com/talks/kathleen_morrill_pirovich_why_are_there_so_many_different_kinds_of_dogs)

“The Surprising Imperial History of the Pekingese Dog” by H.M.A. Leow is about Pekingese dogs in 1900s Britain and how important they were to rich women and their social status. Since the Pekingese originated in China, the women who owned them felt connected to a romanticized version of China. The article’s author explains: “Through fancy dress, women could engage in a fuller fantasy of Imperial China, in which British homes were imagined as Chinese palaces and British daughters, as Chinese princesses” (Leow). By being able to afford exotic dogs, the women used the pets to show they were part of the upper class and could engage in “rare” cultural practices.

In China, the Pekingese were kept by the imperial family. They were not allowed to be owned by ordinary people, and only the emperor and his court could care for them. It isn’t known when exactly they were first bred, but they have been associated with the emperors of China since at least the 700s CE (Szczepanski). The dogs were bred to look like guardian lions, which were believed to protect the emperor and the palace. Actual Asiatic lions, while not native, used to live in China thousands of years ago, but they disappeared before the Han Dynasty (ended in 200 CE). Lions appear in many Buddhist stories because they were present in India, but Chinese people mostly had art and carvings to imagine them. Because of this, Chinese artists created a version of a lion that looked more like a dog; thus, breeds such as the Tibetan Mastiff, Lhasa Apso, and Pekingese were bred to look like this imagined lion rather than a real lion (Szczepanski). With this history of the Pekingese, the British women could show their wealth and make their lifestyle seem more exotic and prestigious.

Read the article here: [daily.jstor.org/the-surprising-imperial-history-of-the-pekingese-dog](https://daily.jstor.org/the-surprising-imperial-history-of-the-pekingese-dog)

And read more about the history of the Pekingese here:

<https://www.thoughtco.com/history-of-the-pekingese-dog-195234>

*Contributed by Alijah Williams, Mathematics Major*

A blog post by Dan Russell called “Answer: Horses are Native to... Where?” is about where horses originally came from. Many people believe horses were first brought to North America by Spanish explorers. However, the article explains that horses actually evolved in North America millions of years ago. Russell tells us that horses “had developed very clearly in North America” before spreading to other continents. Before reading this article, I also thought horses came from Europe. Learning this information shows how research can change what we think we know. Sometimes we believe things are true without really checking the facts. Sometimes things we assume are not completely accurate, and learning new information can change how we understand history.



*The first horses were very small.*

You can read Russell’s blog post here:

<https://searchresearch1.blogspot.com/2022/08/answer-horses-are-native-to-where.html>

# CELEBRATE MORE PETS IN OUR GSU COMMUNITY



## Bella Russell

*Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit*

This is Goose; he is one-and-a-half years old and can destroy any toy he gets in 5 minutes!"



## Amanda Chapman/Schuyler Chapman

*Associate Professors of English*

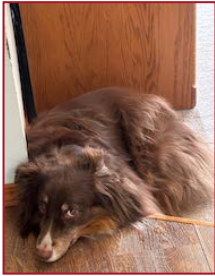
"Foot-Foot (age eight) is a tattler-tale. Prudie (age seven) is a liar and a thief. But they're so cute that all is forgiven."



## Savannah Decker

*Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit*

"This is Myah; she sheds a lot and barks a lot, but she is overall a good pet."



## Ann Reed

*Registrar*

"Dibley showed up at our house two years ago. She was dirty, skinny, and covered with fleas, and she did not even weigh a pound. We have no idea how she got there as we have no neighbors as far as the eye can see. With such a tragic start, she's become a spoiled and pampered little princess."



## Raelyn Fields

*Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit*

"This is my rabbit, Gary, who is a Flemish giant and is almost four years old. A fun fact about him is that his teeth never stop growing."



## Megan Snodgrass

*Art Major*

"Each of my pets is named after a character from a show or movie. This is Bandit, named after *Smokey and the Bandit*, . . .



and this is Bane, named after the character in *The Dark Knight Rises*, . . .



and this is Binx, named after Thackery Binx in *Hocus Pocus*, . . .



and this is Ozzy, named after Ozzy Osbourne (his show was called *The Osbournes*), . . .



and this is Vex, named for an alien in the show *3Below: Tales of Arcadia*.

Yes, I'm aware I have a zoo."



## Rachel Adams

*Certification Analyst, Registrar's Office*

"This is John Boy, the only ram of five lambs born this lambing season. He also weighed the most at birth, coming in at 12.32 pounds. He is about two weeks old here. He will be a great show lamb for my daughter this year."

## STILL SINGING: EXPLORING SIRENS IN HISTORY AND ART

Contributed by Olivia Duffield, Business Major

An article by Anne E. G. Nydam called “The Lure of Sirens” tells what mythical creatures called sirens are and where they have been suspected to live/stay. Nydam goes into detail about how sirens are believed to look and how many there are estimated to exist as well as what they do. There are many different theories and opinions about sirens according to this article. Who knows what is true and what isn’t or if they even really exist or once existed.

Most people have an opinion they come to when they think about a siren, but, as Nydam states, “let’s start with what we know: Sirens sing so beautifully that sailors are lured to their deaths.” I think of sirens this way because this is how they are generally portrayed in movies, stories, and TV shows. I’ve always thought of sirens living in the ocean far out, but Nydam tells us, “Early writers said they were in flowery meadows, and only later did they come to live on cliffs by the sea. Later they were plunged right down into the ocean.” When I think about what they look like, I think of a pretty, dark, mysterious, mermaid-type creature, but Nydam notes that “Homer didn’t describe their appearance—it was their song that mattered—and as for everyone else? Whew take your pick.” Nydam then lists many different ways people believe they look.

I have always liked theories about monsters and other strange creatures being in the ocean; it is interesting to learn about. It is mostly theories, but it’s fun to hear them and create my own opinion about what I want to believe. I’ve seen many sirens in movies and TV shows, and that is why I assumed they’d be pretty, mysterious, dark mermaids that could also walk on land if needed.

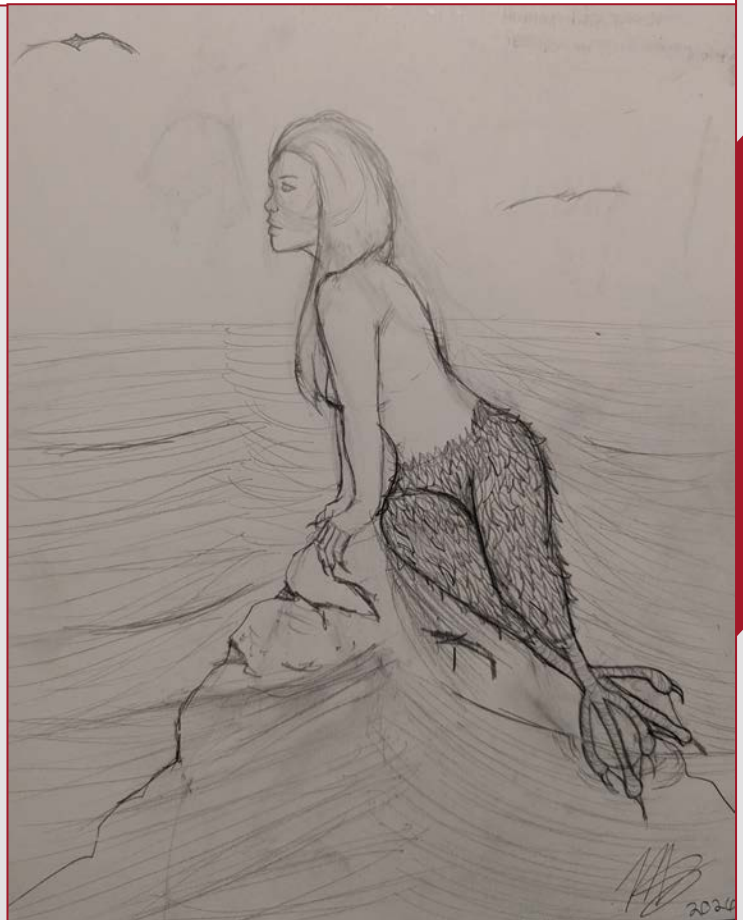
Thinking about what sirens do and where they live, I would assume they wouldn’t actually be the prettiest. If they were seen that way, I think they’d be making people see them the way they want them to by using some kind of superpower or something. Nydam explains that “in the nineteenth century, many artists made them look like straight up sexy human women, because the nineteenth century artists were obsessed with always looking for excuses to paint sexy women.” This is where the idea of them being “pretty” came from.

This article has many different points of view and theories about sirens, and it goes into detail about each one. It also includes many cool pictures of sirens. I really enjoyed this article about sirens and would highly recommend anyone who is interested in deep sea creatures, mythical figures, and monsters to read this article.

Contributed by Megan Snodgrass, Art Major

Sirens are (in Greek mythology) the daughters of Achelous, the God of the River. They are said to be creatures who lure sailors into the waters and to their death with their song. They get their ability from their mother who was a Muse. Artists have made many paintings and pieces of what they believed sirens to look like. In her article “The Lure of Sirens,” Anne E. G. Nydam states, “At some point sirens began to gain piscine traits as well, generally in the form of a fish tail that could be either instead of or in addition to any avian traits.”

Nydam even decided to make her own version of a siren and went as far as breaking the creature down for others to make their own versions. Hers comes from the more romantic side of sirens. In the art world, Romanticism is more dark than what people expect. It’s more like Shakespeare’s view of romance. The one piece she talks about



that I like is one of the depictions of Ulysses’s encounter with the sirens. She says, “Ety’s 1837 sirens are among the corpses of their victims” (Nydam) It just shows how beautiful and deadly a siren can be, which I love.

Nydam’s version of a siren has feathers, which, as a Greek mythology junkie, I appreciate. That got me thinking: I’m an art major. I can make my own siren! Going by Nydam’s guide and breakdown of the creature, of course. (And I do want to note that my style of art is rough sketching.) Working on the face, I decided to go with the face of a beautiful woman. I haven’t heard of there being male sirens, but that doesn’t mean there aren’t any. Moving on to the limbs, I decided to stick with regular arms but with talons at the end of her fingers. Finally, the legs—the choice between scales and feathers. A hard choice indeed.

My inspiration for this part was from the movie *Harry Potter: Goblet of Fire*. When Harry ate the Gillyweed, his body changed to adapt to water, which meant he could breath underwater, but the one thing I noticed was his hands and feet. They were webbed and he was able to swim very fast. Yes, I want to keep the Greek version with the feathers, but I also want to give her the ability of traveling through the water at incredible speeds. I hate when sirens have only scales; they aren’t mermaids! So my siren has feathers, bird-like legs with webbed feet and deadly talons. She would be like one of the birds that dives in the water to get their prey. I think I did a great job with keeping the Greek depiction and the modernization of sirens today. And the most important part: I kept her beautiful and deadly.

You can read Nydam’s article here:  
<https://nydamprintsblackandwhite.blogspot.com/2025/11/the-lure-of-sirens.html>

# CELEBRATE STILL MORE PETS IN OUR GSU COMMUNITY



## Wakasa Ellyson

*Records Assistant III*

"Captain (age two) is a big, kind dog who destroys his brand new toys within a few minutes. Buttercup (age 4?) showed up at my door three years ago and acts like he owns the house now. He is a friendly, lazy cat. These two are besties now."



## Catherine Kong/Michael Vozniak

*Assistant Professors of English*

"Lily (our parents' princess, whom we watch after quite often) is a six-year-old maltipoo who loves veggies and fish and always expects everyone in the house to be with her. CoCo is a tabby cat who mysteriously arrived at our doorstep four years ago. She likes playing with hairbands, but only eats beef! In this picture, she is staring at me because we were about to leave the house."



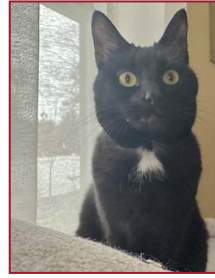
## JD Carpenter

*Assistant Professor of Business; Dept. Chair*

"Denver" is Rapsallion's Nacho Country Roads. He is an old man now, a retired "show dog," and completed his Bronze Grand Champion. He competed in the National Dog Show in Philadelphia (that you see on TV after the parade on Thanksgiving) but, alas, we never got near a camera.



"Dottie" is Rapsallion's Zis Boom Bah. Dottie has a Glenville connection because we were trying to get her from Georgia to West Virginia. It just so happened that our boxing team was competing in a tournament a bit south of Atlanta. So Dottie hooked a ride with Glenville's Boxing Team on their return trip after the tournament. She is the boxing team's unofficial mascot."



## Kaitlin Ensor

*Associate Professor of Psychology  
Chair of Department of Social Sciences*

"This is Poe, age seven, who earned her name by walking into my home and sitting on a DVD copy of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*."

## Dog Music



Amongst dogs are listeners and singers.  
My big dog sang with me so purely,  
puckering her ruffled lips into an O,  
beginning with small, swallowing sounds  
like Coltrane musing, then rising to power  
and resonance, gulping air to continue—  
her passion and sense of flawless form—  
singing not with me, but for the art of dogs.  
We joined in many fine songs—"Stardust,"  
"Naima," "The Trout," "My Rosary," "Perdido."  
She was a great master and died young,  
leaving me with unrelieved grief,  
her talents known to only a few.

Now I have a small dog who does not sing,  
but listens with discernment, requiring  
skill and spirit in my falsetto voice.  
I sing her name and words of love  
andante, con brio, vivace, adagio.  
Sometimes she is so moved she turns  
to place a paw across her snout,  
closes her eyes, sighing like a girl  
I held and danced with years ago.

But I am a pretender to dog music.  
The true strains rise only from  
the rich, red chambers of a canine heart,  
these melodies best when the moon is up,  
listeners and singers together or  
apart, beyond friendship and anger,  
far from any human imposter—  
ballads of long nights lifting  
to starlight, songs of bones, turds,  
conquests, hunts, smells, rankings,  
things settled long before our birth.

— Paul Zimmer

## WE LOVE OUR GSU PETS



### Payton Barnitz

*Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit*

"Luna is a little over two years old. She is a domestic shorthair and was rescued near the local Mexican restaurant."



### Kathy Gilbert

*Director of Aquatics & Recreation*

"I have a 46-year-old red-eared slider turtle that I got when I was a freshman in college. I was dating my husband, Gil, who named it Tooter after an old cartoon character who would always get in trouble and then yell, 'Help me, Mr. Wizard!' Over the years, we found out that our Tooter is a girl. Also, there's a Facebook RES Group. Tooter is one of the oldest members."

Red-eared sliders were the most popular pet turtle species in America up until 1975, when the federal government banned the sale of baby turtles smaller than four inches due to salmonella concerns. Before the ban, they were the original "dime-store turtle," sold in pet shops across the country.

Most people are surprised to learn just how long these little reptiles can live. The average red-eared slider lives well over 20 years in captivity, and the oldest officially recorded captive slider reached 41 years. Kathy's turtle, Tooter, has clearly broken that record, but even Tooter's record may have been broken by a turtle named Magoo, bought in a California pet shop in 1956 Magoo reportedly reached the remarkable age of 65!

So how do they do it? Turtles are built for longevity. Their slow metabolisms mean their bodies wear down far more gradually than most animals. Turtles also hibernate during winter months, essentially pausing their biological clocks for weeks at a time. Cells in long-lived reptiles also show much slower rates of aging at the molecular level compared to mammals.

Diet and environment play a big role too. Red-eared sliders are hearty omnivores, thriving on a varied diet of meat, fish, and vegetables. With the right care, stable temperatures, and clean water, they can remain healthy for decades, making them one of the few pets that may genuinely outlive their owners.

Sources: *PetMD* (<https://www.petmd.com/rc/red-eared-slider-trachemys-scripta-elegans>) and *The Porterville Recorder* ([http://www.recorderonline.com/gallery/magoo-the-turtle-has-been-going-for-65-years/article\\_975451](http://www.recorderonline.com/gallery/magoo-the-turtle-has-been-going-for-65-years/article_975451))

## FOUR-LEGGED MUSES

*Reprinted from "A Few Words About the Four-Legged Muse" at Quotable Furkids.blogspot.*

Edgar Degas said that "muses work all day long and then at night get together and dance." I wonder if this is true of all muses. If you look back on the great authors in history, you will often find that their muse walked on four legs rather than two, since many of the best writers used their dogs as inspiration. I am certainly not claiming that the average writer doesn't have a love for his fellow man, but it does suggest that the writing becomes a little easier when you have a furry companion who doesn't judge you as you tap away at the keys.



*E.B. White and Minnie*

Kurt Vonnegut once famously said that he was "unable to distinguish between the love I have for people and the love I have for dogs." Virginia Woolf was partial to cocker spaniels, but it was one, in particular, a cute little pup name Pinka, that stole her heart, and which also prompted her to write a biography about Flush, a cocker spaniel owned by Elizabeth Barrett Browning. And then there is Stephen King, a writer who penned a terrifyingly famous tale about a rabid dog named Cujo. You might expect that Mr. King was not a fan of dogs based on that storyline, but if you are any sort of fan, you will remember that he devoted a lot of

time to talking about his corgi, Molly, whom he lovingly described as "The Thing of Evil."

The question here is why writers seem to be so devoted to dogs, and I have a few thoughts on that topic. Now, let it be known here that I most certainly do not count myself among the ranks of the names mentioned in that last paragraph, but since I do earn a trifle by writing, and have not one but two dogs at my feet during most of that time, I think I may have some insight.

Writing can be an incredibly lonely life, as you spend much of your time inside your head, usually in a cluttered office space where entry by interlopers is potentially punishable by death. Dogs are the exception here, as they will sit quietly and not interrupt your train of thought. They are more than happy to accept an absent-minded scratch behind the ear, a sure sign that you are aware of their presence even while you work.



*Daphne Du Maurier kept dogs by her side during her entire lifetime.*

Dogs will love every idea that you speak aloud, and they will certainly not tell you that your use of a certain word or phrase is pedantic. That's a job for editors and publishers, none of whom will have the loyalty of your dog. Getting out of your cramped office space is a

must if you plan on surviving the writing process with your sanity intact, and there is no better excuse for an escape than taking your furry friend for a walk. Finally, your dog will gladly accept the blame for eating your manuscript when you are running behind your deadline, although that is a tough story to sell in today's digital world. Most people love dogs, but I believe that writers have more reasons than most to be devoted to their four-legged muse.



## WEIRD QUESTION *of the* WEEK

Here's one for students and faculty: "If you could open the course schedule and see a new elective designed purely for enjoyment, what would you want that elective to be?" And for faculty, we added this part: "Would you want to teach it or enroll in it?"

**Mary Brinker** - Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit

"If I could have any elective for fun, I would want to do a hiking class!"

**Wakasa Ellyson** - Records Assistant III

"I would like to take a Dog Obedience class, a Coffee Trivia class or a Sushi Making class since those are my favorite things. However, the class I want to take the most would be an American Slang (Upper Division) class. I've been living in the U.S. more than 25 years and I still learn new things about the English Language (pronunciation, spelling, slang and such) every day. Sometimes I wonder if it would make my life easier if I knew all these things like American people do."

**Jennifer Wenner** - Senior Lecturer of Communication

"I teach Lifeguarding, and we have taught it at GSU for credit. I think we should every year. There is a big shortage of lifeguards nationwide, and you get a lot of other health and safety instruction with it. But I would love to take a fencing class."

**Fiona VanMatre** - Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit

"If I were to add an elective for fun, I would add a flea market flip class. This would be where you go to different flea markets and buy something and make it better in class."

**Schuyler Chapman** - Associate Professor of English

"I would be most excited to see a class called 'Beneath the American Renaissance: Subversive and Sensational Antebellum US Fiction'; David Reynolds's book of that title (Beneath the American Renaissance) had a great influence on me, and the kinds of narratives it covers are SO weird and surprising. I would love to take a class with that title – there is so much odd-ball lit from that period that I'm sure it would introduce me to material I don't know. However, I would more so want to teach it! Students look at literature from that period as very fuddy-duddy and this kind of class would REALLY demonstrate that things were a whole lot wilder and woolier than textbooks and high school curricula let on."

**Josh Squires** - Assistant Professor of Political Science

"I have actually thought about this before. I am a fantasy football junkie. I think a class on the History of Fantasy Football would be so interesting. I would love to teach it, but I am probably not qualified. So, because of that, I think I would be the first one enrolled!"

**Savannah Decker** - Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit

"If there was a new elective designed purely for fun, I would want the elective to be on economics of the film and music industry. I think this would be super interesting and think maybe an economics professor would be best to teach the class."

**Mike Vozniak** - Assistant Professor of English

"Extinct Animals in Literature and Popular Culture. And yes, I would love to teach it. I've always wanted to assign Michael Crichton's *Jurassic Park* in an English class, because it's such an interdisciplinary book, dealing with questions of science, ethics, business, entertainment, corporations, unpredictability, etc. The current AI debate makes this book especially relevant again. Crichton writes, 'There are very few...research institutions without commercial affiliations. The old days are gone...[R]esearch continues, at a more furious pace than ever. But it is done in secret, and in haste, and for profit.' Plus, we would get to read about dinosaurs and call it 'literary studies.'"

**Dr. Mari Clements** - Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs

"My course favorite would be 'The Wonders of Needlecraft: Knitting and Crocheting for Beginners to Experts.' And I could see either teaching or enrolling—there's always more to learn!"

**Payton Barnitz** - Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit

"If there was a new elective that I could take purely for fun, it would have to be a class that pertains to physical activity. I would love to participate in a Pilates class or some kind of aerobics elective class. I think this type of elective would be so fun and engaging."

**Dwight Heaster** - Associate Professor of Business Administration

"If I opened the schedule and saw a class culinary class where I could explore cuisine from another country, I would sign up immediately. Food is the gateway to so many cultures. It is a creative way to explore a culture and enjoy new food."

**Logan Neal** - Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit

"If I were to create a new course, I'd add an elective designed for creative writing. In this course, students would be encouraged to write as freely as they may want to. This course is centered around freedom of writing and expression without focusing on perfection; while still learning the components of writing and understanding its importance."  
[Editor's Note: See Dr. Minton for info on our Creative Writing class!]

**Bella Russell** - Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit

"If I decided on a new elective, I would love being outdoors and being active, so I would love a class where we just play softball."

**Robin Crigler** - Associate Professor of History

"That's an easy one! Comedy class. I could teach the theory and history, and someone with performing experience could teach the applied stuff. Laughter shapes the world in profound ways, and I think it would be a lot of fun too."

**Paige Taylor** - Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit

"If I were to choose one elective, it would be learning about the Amish. Recently, I have been watching this show on HBO Max and I find it very fascinating, so I think that taking a class would be interesting."

**Gary Arbogast** - Professor of Economics

"My elective course would be: Introduction to Ufology. I would enroll in it as a student. Maybe the university could hire an ET to teach it. Wouldn't that be fantastic—an out-of-this world instructor!"

**Brogann Henry** - Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit

"If I wanted a new elective, I would want a spa class. I would love to paint nails and do facials."

**Kaycee Tennant** - Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit

"An elective I would like to see is horseback riding. I love horses. I grew up on a farm, so I have been around them ever since I was a kid."

**Jeremy Kirk** - Associate Professor of Music

"I would teach Dad Jokes 101: When Jokes Become Apparent."

**Duane Chapman** - Vice President of Enrollment & Student Affairs, Associate Professor of Art, Head Men/Women's Boxing Coach

"UNDERWATER BASKET WEAVING !!!!!

That was always a running concept back in the day as a joke, but seriously you get to "scuba" and make a basket underwater! How cool !!"

