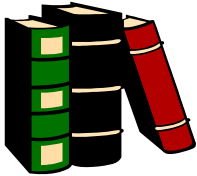


The Growl -- September 1999

The *Growl*

The Monthly Newsletter For The Humphreys College Huskies, Stockton Campus



Born to Write

Cynthia S. Becerra, professor of English

Born in Fresno, California, in 1952, this Mexican-American writer has become known to many as the poet of the Central Valley. Gary Soto, long recognized for his political commentary, has transcended time and place becoming, as one critic states, "not an important Chicano poet but an important American poet."

Starting out in the rich agricultural region of Fresno, he not only toiled the fields alongside migrant workers but also studied literature in the halls of academia at California State University, Fresno. He embodies the diversity of experience that is emblematic of our state. After marrying Carolyn Oda, a Japanese-American, in 1975, he graduated in 1976 with a M.F.A. from the University of California, Irvine. Earning early recognition for his poetry in 1975 by winning the Academy of American Poets Prize, he became a faculty member in both the English and Chicano Studies departments at the University of California, Berkley, until 1993.

In 1993 he left teaching to become a full-time writer. This year, as a result of the influence he has had on American literature, he and four other honorees will receive the Hispanic Heritage Award in Washington, D.C. In addition to his body of work and numerous awards for both his fiction and poetry, he has sponsored a Chicano Chapbook Series that promotes literature by young Chicano writers.

Always an inspiration to young people through his literature, now he plans to cultivate young minds in the classroom, having accepted a position with UC, Riverside, as Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing.

In California Literature, HUM290, on Monday evenings Fall Quarter, we will study Gary Soto's poetry, including his collection *Gary Soto: New and Selected Poems*. Although the poet's diverse and varied life experiences often become the thematic content of many of his works, it is his plain, direct language that captures the reader and sketches both the uniqueness and universality of the California culture.

**REGISTER FALL QUARTER FOR HUM290, CALIFORNIA LITERATURE
ON MONDAY NIGHTS.
TAUGHT BY PROF. CYNTHIA S. BECERRA.**



The Tutorial Center Awaits

Dr. Michael Duffett, Tutorial Center Coordinator

Welcome to those of you who have just joined Humphreys College, the oldest establishment of tertiary education in Stockton. We pride ourselves here on offering students the opportunity to get to know their instructors in a much more personal way than is possible in larger, more amorphous institutions, and one of the best ways to achieve this more personal approach is through the time-honored one-on-one tutorial system, which is offered free of charge to all Humphreys students.

The Tutorial Center is now located in the library, and I am on hand to help with any kind of written papers your instructors may have required. It is important that you understand that I cannot tinker with the content of your paper (that's your job) but I can improve its presentation in terms of grammar, spelling, punctuation and expression. I can also, of course, tutor you in the subjects I myself teach here at Humphreys; those courses are ***English, philosophy, religion, history and Spanish***. We have tutors on hand to help you in ***accounting*** (Debra Queen, who also teaches the subject as a full-time member of our Business Management Department) and in ***math*** (Kimberley Cardiel, who is a whiz Math student).

Come by for help in any way and remember, the Center is for all students. Those of you who have been here for some time will know that many of those whom we have helped have made the Dean's List. If you are a newcomer, we hope that you too, with our help, will too!



Fall Registration Is In Full Swing

Karen Garrett, Academic and Career Counselor

Some Fall classes are filling up fast. Remember to register for the Fall term before leaving on quarter break. Important changes for students to remember in registering for Fall. You must have your registration form sign by the academic advisor. It is advised to check with the financial aid office to insure you may register without delays.

Office of Academic and Career Counseling Hours:

Karen Garrett, Academic and Career Counselor 478-0800 Ext. 129

Monday – Thursday 10:00am – 6:00pm

Friday 10:00am – 4:00pm

The office will be closed Friday, September 17 through Wednesday, September 22.



Write!

Dr. Richard Chabot, professor of sociology

Write. Write term papers, write research papers, write essays, write and more write to make the grade in any of your classes. So much writing the student is being required to do. Seems like the teachers are too lazy to devise a decent multiple choice test; they just grab an essay question out of the air, force the students to write about it, and then grade by throwing the finished product down a stairwell. The heavier the paper, the farther it falls, the higher a grade it gets. The more *bull feathers*, the better. So it seems.

Well, not from the teacher's point of view -- certainly not from mine. George Orwell believed that we write not to say what we think so much as to discover what we think. If you don't write something out, in a letter or a poem or an essay, then your thoughts will remain scattered and only half-formed. By writing, you are actually discovering what you truly believe; you are discovering yourself.

When I assign writing assignments to my students, I am hoping that they will be forced to think about all of the different information found in lecture and text, relate it to their own experiences, and create a new part of themselves, the proof of it to be found in the essay they turn in to me. I do not look for total agreement with my positions, but rather with new ways of looking at what seems to be an old and unforgiving reality. That's what multiple-choice tests tend to support and protect -- the fact and fiction of what others say and think. But when given a chance to write, you can patronize the aging experts while opening a new facet on the meaning of your topic of choice. That new facet is you -- not just the same old you of last year, but a person with new ideas and concepts and viewpoints that would never have been thought without someone of your background or personality. But just sitting back, downing a cold one, and thinking fun thoughts is not enough. You do have to read, you do have to research, and you do have to write. Not for us, not for the teachers, but for yourself. I hope that's how you look at it when you next receive a writing assignment from me -- a chance to discover what it is you really think.

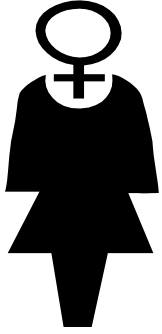


Scholarships Abound

Karen Garrett, Academic and Career Counselor

Scholarships are being announced by professional organizations and businesses during the fall of each year. Remember to check local newspapers and the Counseling office for new scholarships.

Note: We have just received scholarship announcements and applications for accounting majors. Hurry, though, the deadline for these is September 15!!!!!!



Meet Your Teacher

“THANK YOU FOR BELIEVING IN ME...”

Debora Queen, instructor of accounting

Debora Queen was raised in the Bay Area. She sees herself a transplant to the San Joaquin County. She arrived about 20 years ago and began to raise a family...

“My mother owned a beauty salon, and I did some of her bookkeeping for her as a child. When I moved out on my own, I found that I had a real knack for numbers and pursued a career in accounting. After working in the field for about 12 years, I had come to the realization that without additional education I was not going to advance any further. Thus, I enrolled at Humphreys College to obtain my bachelor's degree in accounting.”

Not so long ago, you were a Humphreys student. In fact, you were the 1998 salutatorian at Humphreys.

“I feel as though I am a lot like our student body, the returning student who was a single parent. My goal was to obtain my bachelor's degree and become the Corporate Controller, or hot shot CPA. With some encouragement from my now fellow faculty members, I set out to become an instructor. I am currently enrolled in a MBA program at UOP, and there are some thoughts towards obtaining my doctoral degree as well.”

In your opinion, who can be an accountant?

“I find that most of the students sign up for accounting with a preconceived notion that it is a lot of math. Let me dispel that notion: it is a lot of organizational skills. If you can add, subtract, multiply, and divide you can do accounting.”

Why did you decide to teach?

“In the course of my Humphreys student years, I found that I love teaching. Let me address your question in an unusual way. Here is a story a friend of mine passed on to me. I would like to share it with you:

~ It is a story of an elementary school teacher, Mrs. Thompson. As she stood in front of her 5th grade class on the very first day of school, she told the children a lie. Like most teachers, she looked at her students and said that she loved them all the same. But that was impossible, because there in the front row, slumped in his seat, was a little boy named Teddy Stoddard. Mrs. Thompson had watched Teddy the year before and noticed that he didn't play well with the other children, that his clothes were messy and that he constantly needed a bath. And Teddy could be unpleasant. It got to the point where Mrs. Thompson would actually take delight in marking his papers with a broad red pen, making bold X's and then putting a big “F” at the top of his papers.

~ Mrs. Thompson was required to review each child's past records and she put Teddy's off until last. However, when she reviewed his file, she was in for a surprise. Teddy's first grade teacher wrote, “Teddy is a bright child with a ready laugh. He does his work neatly and has good manners... he is a

joy to be around.” His second grade teacher wrote, “Teddy is an excellent student, well-liked by his classmates, but he is troubled because his mother has a terminal illness and life at home must be a struggle.” His third grade teacher: “His mother’s death has been hard on him. He tries to do his best, but his father doesn’t show much interest, and his home life will soon affect him if some steps aren’t taken.” Teddy’s fourth grade teacher wrote, “Teddy is withdrawn and doesn’t show much interest in school. He doesn’t have many friends and sometimes sleeps in class.”

~ By now, Mrs. Thompson realized the problem; she was ashamed of herself. She felt even worse when her students brought her Christmas presents, wrapped in beautiful ribbons and bright paper, except for Teddy’s. His present was clumsily wrapped in the heavy, brown paper that he got from a grocery bag. Mrs. Thompson took pains to open it in the middle of the other presents. Some of the children started to laugh when she found a rhinestone bracelet with some of the stones missing and a bottle that was one quarter full of perfume. But she stifled the children’s laughter when she exclaimed how pretty the bracelet was, putting it on, and dabbing some of the perfume on her wrist... Teddy Stoddard stayed after school that day just long enough to say, “Mrs. Thompson, today you smelled just like my Mom used to.” After the children left she cried for at least an hour. On that very day, she quit teaching reading, and writing, and arithmetic. Instead, she began to teach children. Mrs. Thompson paid particular attention to Teddy. As she worked with him, his mind seemed to come alive. The more she encouraged him, the faster he responded. By the end of the year, Teddy had become one of the smartest children in the class and, despite her lie that she would love all the children the same, Teddy became one of her “teacher’s pets.” A year later, she found a note under her door, from Teddy, telling her that she was still the best teacher he ever had in his whole life.

~ Six years went by before she got another note from Teddy. He wrote that he had finished high school, third in his class, and she was still the best teacher he ever had in his whole life. Four years after that, she got another letter, saying that while things had been tough at times, he’d stayed in school, had stuck with it, and would soon graduate from college with the highest of honors. He assured Mrs. Thompson that she was still the best and favorite teacher he ever had in his whole life. Then four more years passed and yet another letter came. This time he explained that after he got his bachelor’s degree, he decided to go a little further. The letter explained that she was still the best and favorite teacher he ever had. But now his name was a little longer. The letter was signed, Theodore F. Stoddard, M.D.

~ The story doesn’t end there. You see, there was yet another letter that spring. Teddy said he’d met this girl and was going to be married. He explained that his father had died a couple of years ago and he was wondering if Mrs. Thompson might agree to sit in the place at the wedding that was usually reserved for the mother of the groom. Of course, Mrs. Thompson did. She wore that bracelet, the one with several rhinestones missing. And she made sure that she was wearing the perfume that Teddy remembered his mother wearing on their last Christmas together. They hugged each other, and Dr. Stoddard whispered in Mrs. Thompson’s ear, ‘Thank you, Mrs. Thompson, for believing in me. Thank you so much for making me feel important and showing me that I could make a difference.’ Mrs. Thompson, with tears in her eyes, whispered back. ‘Teddy, you have it all wrong. You were the one who taught me that I could make a difference. I didn’t know how to teach until I met you.’

I hope I’m as perceptive about Humphreys students as Mrs. Thompson was.”

~ Stanislav Perkner



What Are They Reading Now?

Here are some of the books your instructors have been reading. Buy a book today!

Cynthia S. Becerra

Recently, I read *The General's Daughter*, recommended to me by Linda Rahmoller. By the prolific author Nelson DeMille, the novel is a very dark psychological mystery that centers on a beautiful young captain's apparent rape and murder. It kept me reading because of the great characterizations and the chilling suspense.

Karen Garrett

Have you ever wondered who went to college with Hillary Rodham-Clinton and what her classmates are doing? You may be surprised to learn that Hillary is one of the more conservative of her classmates on how she has approached her personal life and her career. *Rebels in White Gloves – Coming of Age with Hillary's Class-Wellesley '69* by Miriam Horn is a must read for anyone who is interested in the personal and political of women. Well documented for research use in coursework. If you'd like to review the book, come by the counseling office.

Michael Duffett

I'm reading *Killing Mister Watson* by the writer and naturalist Peter Mathiessen. It is a remarkable evocation of life in nineteenth century Florida.

Jess Bonds

It seems that I'm always reading and re-reading *Markings* by Dag Hammarskjöld. The book is a collection of his reflections while he was a prominent world political figure. Here is some information about Dag from a web site (<http://www.sr.se/rs/facts/hammar.htm>):

Swedish diplomat and author Dag Hammarskjöld was the second Secretary-General of the United Nations. He died in a mysterious plane crash in southern Africa in September 1961, while on a personal initiative to solve the then-Congo crisis. Dag Hammarskjöld was awarded the 1961 Nobel Peace Prize, the only person to ever win a Nobel Prize posthumously.

On August 19, 1998, the chairman of the South Africa Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, announced that the commission had uncovered documents indicating a plot by the then-apartheid government to kill Dag Hammarskjöld, together with the American CIA and Britain's MI6.

Markings is very introspective and poignant. I encourage you to seek out a copy soon. Interestingly, one of the last poems he wrote predicted is death.