

Beloit College Department of Education and Youth Studies

Featured Editor:

Nathaniel Javid
javidn@beloit.edu

Consulting Faculty
and Staff:

Sonja Darlington
darling@beloit.edu

Beth Erickson,
secretary
edys@beloit.edu

Department Website:
<http://www.beloit.edu/education/>

Department Email:
edys@beloit.edu

Our Loss, Welty Environmental Center's Gain

Former Education and Youth Studies Department Secretary, Lena Verkuilen, has accepted a position as Director of the Welty Environmental Center in Beloit, Wisconsin, where she will provide environmental education services to the county. After serving as the Education Department's secretary for two years, Ms. Verkuilen has found a position in her field of expertise. She graduated with a degree in biology and a minor in geology and has 14 years of professional experience in the environmental and experiential education field. "This was a homecoming for me," says Verkuilen.

As director of the Welty Environmental Center, Ms. Verkuilen is involved in nearly everything that happens there. Verkuilen works with other nature centers in the Rock County park system, leads class groups, schedules classes, plans special programs for the public, attends board meetings, and talks with visitors. She also helps introduce many visitors to a broad array of habitats, including streams and ponds, prairies, woods and parks. Verkuilen also focuses on wildlife, including insects, fish, birds and other animals.

Ms. Verkuilen is also working on special projects such as updating the Welty brochure and creating educational programs for the Nature Rock series, which are designed to introduce families to wildlife habitats and the importance of restoration and protection of these natural areas.

In addition, Ms. Verkuilen is working with Beloit College senior, Jessica Buchberger, who serves as the Center's Duffy intern, on creating promotional materials and activities and bringing them to the Beloit Farmers' Market.

Verkuilen is taking the Center's motto to heart: "Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads," a quotation from Henry David Thoreau. "I love being at the Welty Center!" she said. Her favorite part of the job so far is the closeness with nature: "My office is at the edge of Beckman Mill County Park, so it's a beautiful environment," as she notes the scenic shift from crowded highways and city streets to rolling hills and scenic backroads.

"I get the chance to develop programming, which is my very favorite thing to do. It makes for a nice balance when I have meetings and scheduling piling up to take a ten minute walk around the park and clear my head."

Nevertheless, Ms. Verkuilen sincerely misses the Education and Youth Studies department here at Beloit. Most of all, she says, "I miss the faculty, other college staff, and the students. I loved talking with students as they came to the EDYS office with questions, or just to talk. I enjoyed having conversations with the faculty in the MI halls."

Ms. Verkuilen strongly encourages students who are interested in the environment to investigate fieldwork and internship opportunities at the Welty Center. Or, she says, if you are simply looking to clear your head, "take highway 81 west of town about 7 miles to County Road H. Turn left on C.R. H, and we're about a mile down. Welty is the little blue house on the corner."

Students can find out more about the Welty Environmental Center at <http://weltycenter.org> or by calling 608-361-1377



Ms. Verkuilen teaching sustainability to girls through crafts.

Welcome, Beth Erickson

The Education and Youth Studies department warmly welcomes its new interim administrative assistant, Beth Erickson. Ms. Erickson also is working as the administrative assistant of the music department, but she accepted this interim position in the Education and Youth Studies department this fall until EDYS finds a permanent staff member.

Ms. Erickson is very enthusiastic about her work in the Education Department: "I really love working in the EDYS department... All faculty are very friendly and helpful. I haven't had much student contact yet, so I am looking forward to that."

Ms. Erickson notes that the work in EDYS is notably different from music. "EDYS is a lot more record keeping and dealing with official things, whereas music is handling a lot of student needs, coordinating adjunct faculty, and getting students ready for private lessons."

When asked what it's like to juggle her two different schedules, Erickson states that it has been good so far. "It creates a little bit of a challenge but so far I have no issues. I am also very glad that the EDYS department is understanding and lets me work around the hours I'm already working at the music department."

In her time at the department, Ms. Erickson plans to improve organization in the department office, MI 224, and to streamline systems in order to make things more efficient and easier to find.



Beth Erickson

Professor William New in Slovakia this January

William New, associate professor of education at Beloit College, will be on sabbatical this spring in Nitra, Slovakia, under the Senior Fulbright Fellowship award he received in the spring of 2009 for his work in youth studies. Professor New will leave for Slovakia in the first week of January 2010 and will be returning to the states in July. While in Slovakia, he will be teaching youth studies at the University of Constantine. He plans on teaching a course entitled "Youth and the Global Village" and perhaps an advanced English conversation course as well.

Forty miles from Bratislava, one-hundred miles from Vienna, and one-hundred miles from Budapest, Nitra is one of the oldest settlements in Slovakia, marked by its historic castles and churches. "Nitra is centrally located in the heart of the Austro-Hungarian Empire," professor New exclaimed. His passion for the central European lifestyle overshadows the fact that he has been to Slovakia two or three times before and has conducted research there in the past. Professor New is eagerly awaiting his arrival so he can increase his knowledge of this largely rural and mountainous country.

New is looking forward to getting to know the students and faculty at the University and being a part of the department's faculty. New previously taught for six months in the Czech Republic but he did not have much interaction with the students there, so he hopes his experience in Slovakia will be different. In addition to youth studies, New also teaches minority education and education policy and law, which he hopes to learn more about while on sabbatical.



Professor William New

New is excited to research what it's like to be a Hungarian in Slovakia, considering the tension that has historically existed between the two countries. He remarked that Slovakia is famous for its spas and spring waters, so he plans to research the history of the spa. He also plans to research gypsies in Roma, which has been of personal interest to him for several years. New asserted that Slovakia is a particularly interesting country to study: Slovakia entered the European Union in 2004 and he notes that it is the "poor cousin" of the Czech Republic, as Slovakia peacefully split from the Czech Republic in 1991.

After New completes his sabbatical work, he plans to vacation in Greece and Istanbul before his return to the States. New urges Beloit students to come to him with any questions they have about central Europe and/or if they are particularly interested in that part of the world.

Japanese and Ethiopian Culture Featured in Kids Read Aloud and Activity

How do you attract more local residents to downtown Beloit? You might try something from Japan or Ethiopia. That's what students from Professor Sonja Darlington's course, EDYS 262: Exploring Language, Literature, and Literacy, dreamed up for a collaborative event two weekends in September.

The Kids Read Aloud and Activity event at the Turtle Creek Bookstore in downtown Beloit featured Japanese and Ethiopian culture. The events took place on Saturday, September 19th from 10-11 a.m. for the Ethiopian Culture and Saturday, September 26th from 10-11 a.m. for the Japanese Culture. Professor Darlington orchestrated these events by working with the organization "Doodles." The project came out of a discussion with Peter Fronk, owner of the Turtle Creek bookstore, who emphasized that he would like to make more connections with the College.

These events give students in grades K-2 and 3-5 an opportunity to learn about and get involved in cultural read alouds and folk tales through a "make and take" activity designed so that children can take an artifact home that relates to the storytelling of Ethiopia and/or Japan. The intent of having an hour-long event is that if parents wish, they can drop off their children at the bookstore while they shop. Department secretary, Beth Erickson, is responsible for the poster design. The students in EDYS 262 organized the materials for the Read Aloud, including finding background information on their respective countries and selecting the trade book that they read. Professor Darlington also worked with Tim McKern and Cecil Youngblood in putting together these events. The details of these events were publicized by Vision Beloit.



Professor Sonja Darlington's class EDYS 262: Participants in the Kids Read Aloud and Activities

Priscilla Watson

Priscilla read aloud on Ethiopian culture

Sally Jaffray

Sally compiled facts about Japan and discussed several books with her partner who read the books to a group of older children.



Bonny Sucherman

Bonny introduced Ethiopian culture to 3rd-5th graders by providing them with some basic facts and explanations.

Jake Majeski

Jake worked with and instructed the younger children in an arts and crafts activity on Japanese culture.



Miranda Mueller

Miranda read Kaldi and the Dancing Goats, which tells the story of the origins of Ethiopian coffee. Miranda also went to various elementary schools in Beloit to deliver posters about the event.

Chelsea Knauf

For the Ethiopia event, Chelsea completed a piece on Amharic (Ethiopia's official language) and helped out with background materials.

For the Japanese event, Chelsea was involved in the Japanese language.

Melinda Kraus-Perrotta

Melinda read The Three Questions aloud to the older group.



Kathleen Maynor

Kate did the read-aloud on Japanese culture for the younger children.



Beloit Alumnus Leaves for Krakow

Beloit alumnus Samuel Breslin will be leaving for Krakow, Poland at the end of October to complete his student teaching at The International School of Krakow. "This will provide an altogether unexplored challenge for me," Breslin states. At school, he will be interacting with students from around the world much like the relatively diverse student body at Turner High School where Breslin currently teaches English. Still, teaching abroad will provide a completely different range of challenges for Breslin. "In attempting to teach them literature and language skills effectively, I will be challenged to bridge the cultural differences they have between each other, and what is more, the gulf that stands between them and myself," Breslin states. Nevertheless, he remains enthusiastic about his departure as he hopes to "learn a bit of Polish so that [he] can get married and gain citizenship."



Samuel Breslin

Below is a list of Beloit College students who are student teaching this fall, 2009.

Elementary School

Margaret Clarke '09, McNeel Middle School
Lia Bengston '09, Lac du Flambeau Public School

Secondary School

Carl Anderson '09, South Beloit High School
Jason Connelly '09, Clinton High School
Jordan DeGeorge '10, Clinton High School
Robert Hipschman '09, J.A. Craig High School
Elizabeth McClaren '09, South Beloit High School
Ryan Schmitz '10, Beloit Memorial High School
John Tryneski '09, Beloit Memorial High School

Part-time Student Teachers

Anna Blankschien '09, Hackett Elementary School
Samuel Breslin '09, Turner High School

Art

Laura Denk '07, Hononegah High School