

12-2010

New Writing Series- Spring 2011

English Department

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CULTURAL AFFAIRS/DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES

GRANT APPLICATION

I. Applicant/Organization: English Department & National Poetry Foundation

II. a. Responsible Organization Officer: Steve Evans

b. Title: Associate Professor, New Writing Series Coordinator

c. Campus Address (include Email and Telephone): 313 Neville Hall; steven.evans@maine.edu; 1-3818

III. Summary of program requiring funding (title; featured artist(s); speaker(s); scheduled date(s):

The New Writing Series • Spring 2011

Featuring five CA/DLS co-sponsored writers in four events: Brock Clark (fiction), Claudia Emerson (poetry), Ken Irby (poetry), Pierre Joris (poetry), and James Wagner (poetry, translation).

Four additional events for which no CA/DLS support is sought will include three fiction readings by candidates for an Assistant Professorship in Creative Writing-Fiction and the annual Steve Grady Awards in Creative Writing.

Most events take place on Thursday afternoons at 4:30 in the Soderberg Center Auditorium, Jenness Hall. All events are free and open to the general public.

IV. Budget Proposal Form must be attached. *Please see attached Excel Spreadsheet.*

Funding for current application is contingent upon submission of reports for any previous grant awards, including final budget and attendance figures.

SEND COMPLETED APPLICATION VIA EMAIL TO: wanda.maddencarr@maine.edu

For questions regarding the Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series, please contact Wanda Madden-Carr at 1-1516

\$3500

I	Event Expenses								
	writer	honorarium	travel by	travel from	trav allotment	accommod	meals	total	
	Brock Clarke (fiction)	\$500	car	Portland	\$100	\$150	\$100		
	Claudia Emerson (poetry)	\$1,000	air	Virginia	\$500	\$150	\$100		
	James Wagner (poetry)	\$500	air	SF	\$600	\$160	\$100		
	Ken Irby (poetry)	\$500	air	NYC	\$500	\$150	\$100		
	Pierre Joris (poetry)	\$500	air	NYC	\$500	\$150	\$100		
	total	\$3,000			\$2,200	\$760		\$5,960	
II	Fixed Expenses								
	agent	expense							
	To be determined	\$250	Poster Design						
	To be determined	\$225	Poster Printing						
	University Relations	\$800	Digital Archive						
	Pulp & Paper Foundation	donated	Room Rental	(\$300 value)					
	total	\$1,275							
III	Total Series Expenses								
	Event Expenses	\$5,960							
	Fixed Expenses	\$1,275							
	Total Expenses	\$7,235							
IV	Overview of Funding								
	English Dept (Elliott Fund)	\$2,235							
	English Dept (Ellis Fund)	\$500							
	Honors College (Gift Fund)	\$1,000							
	CA/DLS Request	\$3,500							
		\$7,235							

November 29, 2010

Dear Members of the Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series Committee,

I write to request the Committee's support for the spring 2011 New Writing Series, an innovative literary arts program sponsored by the English Department and the National Poetry Foundation.

The amount we request, **\$3,500**, is less than one-half of the projected operating budget for the spring Series of **\$7,235**. The majority of the financial support for the Series will be provided by the English Department through its Elliott Fund (\$2,235) and Ellis Fund (\$500). The Honors College has graciously agreed to provide co-sponsoring support for the spring Series (\$1000). The detailed budget appended to this letter provides an overview of projected expenses and revenue sources.

The spring 2011 line-up will feature five writers—four poets and a fiction writer—in CA/DLS-supported events, along with four other events for which CA/DLS-support is not sought (three fiction events featuring candidates for an Assistant Professorship in Creative Writing-Fiction and the annual Steve Grady Awards, which showcase the literary achievements of students in our BA and MA programs).

As the brief biographies appended to this letter demonstrate, the writers we propose to bring to campus represent a wide range of literary activity and achievement: Claudia Emerson won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 2006; Brock Clarke is author of the best-selling novel *An Arsonist's Guide to Writers' Homes in New England*; Pierre Joris is an internationally recognized poet, translator, and anthologist; Ken Irby has just seen the publication of his *Collected Poems*, documenting a prolific career that began in 1964 and continues apace today; and James Wagner is four books into a distinguished career as a poet and translator. All but Pierre Joris will be making first appearances in the New Writing Series and their presence on campus promises to increase the linguistic, artistic, sexual, and social diversity of our community.

New Writing Series programming has always been guided the principles of innovation, collaboration, interdisciplinarity, and diversity. From the start we have also worked hard to maximize the impact of real-time events within the rapidly-changing new media context. For example, the NWS blog has received more than 43,000 page views since its creation in fall 2006 (up from 38,000 at the time of our last application). Our Facebook group, created in the fall of 2007, has more than 135 members and reaches many more people with event and Series information. The Flickr page on which we document events has received roughly 17,500 views (up from 5000 at the time of our last application). And we have been making NWS content (sound and video files) available both through our blog and through UMaine's iTunes U since April of 2008. (A list of the URLs for these projects is appended to this application.) The real-time event in front of a live audience remains our Series' anchor point, but using the web to extend brief visits into lasting on-line presences is an effective way of maximizing the return on the investment it takes to bring people to campus.

Some other reasons for supporting the NWS:

- **A cutting-edge research university with an institutional commitment to innovation deserves literary arts programming that is diverse, daring, and original.** The New Writing Series is such a program. While all modes and methods of writing fall within its ambit of curiosity, we take care to ensure that writers whose work departs from, and perhaps even challenges, dominant commercial and aesthetic assumptions are given a fair hearing. Our programming is consistently among the most diverse on the campus (and by extension in the region), foregrounding ethnic, linguistic, socio-economic, and sexual diversity (see the appended document “About the New Writing Series” for details). And our programming is original: no other institution in Maine, and only a few others in the country, have shown the kind of commitment the New Writing Series has toward the full-range of contemporary literary practice. We seek to confer recognition with our programming, not just to ratify judgments made somewhere up the literary food chain.

- **The New Writing Series does a lot with a little.** For what would be a modest honorarium if paid in a lump sum to a single celebrity on campus for one evening, the New Writing Series creates a coherent sequence of events that adds a distinctive dimension to the intellectual and artistic climate on campus and in the region. The honoraria we offer are low (between \$250 and \$1000) and we economize in every way we can on other expenses (see appended budget). Because the Series has an established identity—in terms of time (Thursday afternoons), place (the Soderberg Center Auditorium), and “look” (MaJo Keleshian’s bold designs, echoed in our electronic publicity)—we get more out of each individual event. This has been a key to our successful audience development. Inertia is the enemy of artistic creation: the New Writing Series creates momentum around the act of literary creation, stirring up lively conversations that resonate beyond the cube-like walls of the Soderberg Auditorium.

- **The New Writing Series has a strong local audience, but it also brings national visibility to the University of Maine.** The off-campus publicity for the New Writing Series always spotlights UMaine (rather than the English Department or the NPF): our goal is to keep Orono on the national map when it comes to the literary arts, and to emphasize that the UMS flagship campus is at the leading edge of literary artistic practice. No other college in the state or campus in the UM system can demonstrate the depth of commitment and ongoing excellence that the New Writing Series, with the Committee’s support, has achieved.

- **Literary culture is an important piece in the “creative economy” puzzle.** A university campus that fails to stay in touch with contemporary literary practice is depriving itself of access to the fresh thinking that writers, often in advance of

their colleagues in other disciplines, bring to the world around us. The literary arts are essential to the creation of an atmosphere of free exploration of any and all aspects of contemporary existence, an atmosphere as decisive in the sciences as in the humanities.

- **The “New” in New Writing Series.** We have been fortunate to receive Committee support for the NWS in the past and we are deeply grateful for it. But the enduring institutional framework of the Series should not mask the fact that we bring new voices and visions to campus with every fresh season of the NWS. We are, in other words, offering “new programming” for the Committee’s consideration, programming that will disappear from the cultural calendar without your support.

I have included an itemized budget (using an Excel spreadsheet in lieu of the standard form) for the spring 2011 New Writing Series. In keeping with CA/DLS policy, we strive to offer the lowest honoraria compatible with a writer’s reputation and standard fee. I will note that our typical “ceiling” of \$1000 (being offered to just one writer in the spring) is well below what most successful fiction writers (and their agents) will consider. Our standard travel policy allots to invited writers “up to \$500 for travel” and we work with individuals to minimize that expense whenever possible. Accommodations are provided by University Inn in Orono and are estimated at the appropriate seasonal rates. Meal and reception expenses **do not** factor into our request for Committee support: they are included here for informational purposes only. In those cases where scheduling or other difficulties preclude a proposed writer from participating in the Series, we seek replacements of comparable rank and reputation to fill the slot. I believe that the other items should be self-explanatory, but I am more than happy to answer any questions that may arise.

This proposal has been reviewed and approved by English Department Chair Naomi Jacobs, who exercises discretion over the Elliott and Ellis Funds. It also has the support of Associate Professor Carla Billitteri, chair of the Speaker and Special Events Committee in English.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Steve Evans

Associate Professor of English
New Writing Series Coordinator
Graduate Program Coordinator
National Poetry Foundation

Brief biographical and bibliographical profiles (in alphabetical order)

Bio-bibliographical Information (alphabetical order)

Brock Clarke is the author of five books, most recently *Exley, An Arsonist's Guide to Writers' Homes in New England* (a national bestseller that has appeared in a dozen foreign editions), *The Ordinary White Boy*, *What We Won't Do*, and *Carrying the Torch*. He has twice been a finalist for a National Magazine Award in Fiction. His work has appeared in the *Virginia Quarterly Review*, *OneStory*, *The Believer*, *Georgia Review*, and *Southern Review*; and in the annual *Pushcart Prize* and *New Stories* from the South anthologies and on NPR's *Selected Shorts*. He lives in Portland, Maine, and teaches creative writing at Bowdoin College. This will be Clarke's first appearance in the *New Writing Series*.

Claudia Emerson, born in 1957, won the 2006 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry for her collection *Late Wife*. She is a professor of English and Arrington Distinguished Chair in Poetry at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Virginia and a contributing editor of the literary magazine *Shenandoah*. In summer of 2008, she was named Poet Laureate of Virginia by Governor Timothy M. Kaine. Emerson was awarded an NEA grant in 1994 and a Witter Bynner Fellowship in 2005. Her books include *Pharaoh, Pharaoh* (1997); *Pinion, An Elegy* (2002), and *Figure Studies* (2008), all with Louisiana State UP. This will be Emerson's first appearance in the *New Writing Series*.

Ken Irby was born in Bowie, Texas, in 1936 and grew up in Fort Scott, Kansas. He received degrees from Harvard, Berkeley, and the University of Kansas. After a stint in the Army (1960-62), Irby managed a tailor shop in San Francisco, then began teaching at Tufts in the early 1970s. In 1973 a Fulbright took him to Denmark, where he taught at the English Institute of Copenhagen University. He is Associate Professor of English at the University of Kansas, Lawrence. His life's work has recently been gathered under the title *The Intent On: Collected Poems, 1962-2006* (North Atlantic Books, 2009). This will be Irby's first appearance in the *New Writing Series*.

Pierre Joris, born in Strasbourg, France in 1946 and raised in Ettelbruck, Luxembourg, is a poet and translator. He left Luxembourg at nineteen and since then has lived in the US, Great Britain, North Africa and France. In 1992 he returned to the Mid-Hudson valley and teaches in the Department of English at University at Albany. He has published more than twenty volumes of poetry and is a well-known translator, notably of Paul Celan's work, and anthologist, co-editing with Jerome Rothenberg the two-volume *Poems for the Millennium* for the University of California Press. Joris last read in the *New Writing Series* in the spring of 2006.

James Wagner is the author of *Geisttraum* (Esther Press, 2010), *Work Book* (Nothing Moments, 2007), *Trilce* (Calamari Press, 2006), and the false sun recordings (3rd bed, 2003). His poems have recently appeared in *Abraham Lincoln*, *Fence*, *SPD Today*, *Spring Formal*, *West Wind Review*, and *Zoland Poetry*. This will be Wagner's first appearance in the *New Writing Series*.

About the New Writing Series — A Brief History

The New Writing Series was formally inaugurated in the spring of 2000 when a proposal drafted by Steve Evans in consultation with Benjamin Friedlander and Burton Hatlen received unanimous approval from the English department's Speaker and Special Events Committee, then chaired by Welch Everman. In the twenty semesters of its existence, it has served as an instrument for investigating the state of contemporary writing here in Maine, in the U.S. and Canada more broadly, and to some extent the world (Nigerian, Australian, Jamaican, English, Chilean, and other writers have come to Orono through the Series). The Series receives primary funding through the English Department's Lloyd H. Elliott fund and has received consistent administrative support from the National Poetry Foundation, matching funds through the Cultural Affairs Committee, and co-sponsorships from a wide variety of departments and programs (the Honors College, Art, Multicultural Programs, Women in the Curriculum, Wilde Stein, Modern Languages & Classics, and others).

The primary objectives of the New Writing Series are (i) to make contemporary poetry and fiction a valued part of the cultural life at the University of Maine, (ii) to broaden the University's local, national, and international reputation as a site of vibrant cultural exchange and creativity, and (iii) to cultivate links within the University as well as between the University and area secondary schools that foster imaginative approaches to thinking about contemporary literary practices. Whereas developing an audience for individual events can be difficult, a Series creates an ongoing context for the exploration of contemporary writing and signals a more serious level of commitment to the inclusion of the literary arts in the cultural repertoire of campus and community life.

Since 2000, the Series has hosted more than 160 events, featuring more than 210 individual writers, and it has earned a loyal local audience (typical event attendance ranges between 40 and 150 people) as well as a strong national reputation. Extended residencies by Robert Creeley (between 2000-2003) and Alice Notley (2004) have been coordinated in conjunction with the Series, as has a Libra Professorship that brought four African American poets—Jay Wright, Jayne Cortez, Lorenzo Thomas, and Amiri Baraka—to campus in 2001.

A Series weblog was created in the fall of 2006 and a substantial archive of materials of research and pedagogical value (countless hours of sound recordings, videotapes of live readings, forty professional quality digital-video "Poet Profiles" of NWS participants) has been carefully gathered and organized over the years.

The New Writing Series on the Web

The New Writing Series blog (main source for NWS news)

<http://nwsnews.wordpress.com/>

The New Writing Series on Facebook (registration required)

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2511086192>

The New Writing Series on Flickr

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/thirdfactory/>

The New Writing Series on UMaine's iTunes U

<http://www.umaine.edu/itunesu/>

(click "Open Umaine on iTunes U" in upper right, then scroll to
"Courses—English—New Writing Series")

The New Writing Series on YouTube

<http://www.youtube.com/user/npfvideo>

The New Writing Series on LibraryThing Local

<http://www.librarything.com/venue/18404/UMaine-New-Writing-Series>

Cultural Affairs Committee
and
Distinguished Lecture Series
c/o Wanda Madden-Carr
201 Alumni Hall
University of Maine

December 14, 2010

To: Steven Evans

From: Melissa Mayard & Dan Sandweiss, Co-Chairs

On behalf of the Cultural Affairs Committee and Distinguished Lecture Series, it gives us great pleasure to inform you that your proposal, New Writing Series Spring 2011, has been awarded \$3500.00.

Please contact Wanda Madden-Carr at 1-1516 to discuss the procedures in place for the submission of financial expenses related to this award at your earliest convenience.

The following acknowledgement is required on ALL promotional material: ***This event was supported in part by a grant from the Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series.***

Attached is a form for your use to summarize the benefits derived from this grant. This form should be submitted within 30 days after the conclusion of the event. Timely submission of your summary will be considered as part of any future funding requests.

The Cultural Affairs Committee members congratulate you and wish you much success on this project.

cc: Stella Santerre

CULTURAL AFFAIRS/DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES
GRANT REPORT FORM
New Writing Series Spring 2011

The UMaine New Writing Series received a commitment of \$3,500 from the Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series Committee in support of literary programming in the spring semester of 2011.

The New Writing Series hosted three CA/DLS-supported events in the spring, featuring poets James Wagner and Rosmarie Waldrop and fiction writer Brock Clarke. Total event attendance was 175 (Waldrop 70, Clarke 55, Wagner 50), with an average attendance of 58 (which suits the capacity at Soderberg Auditorium very nicely).

All events were documented on digital videotape and will continue to reach interested members of the local and national community through on-line archiving.

A fourth event, featuring the poets Ken Irby and Pierre Joris, had to be rescheduled due to a bereavement in Joris's immediate family.

The total operating costs for the spring season—which included five additional events that were ineligible for CA/DLS support—came to \$8765. The total CA/DLS eligible expenses (travel, honoraria) came to \$4021 and the fifty percent match came to \$2011, well below the \$3500 awarded.

The English Department's Elliot and Ellis Funds and the Honors College provided the remainder of support for the Series.

Detailed event information is archived for public access on the NWS blog at

<http://nwsnews.wordpress.com/category/events/>

and photographic documentation is available at

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/thirdfactory/>

Respectfully and gratefully submitted by Steve Evans, Associate Professor of English and NWS Coordinator.