This spring feels like a car that just couldn’t get its engine to turn over. Instead, it sat sputtering in the driveway for weeks, spewing snowflakes. But the rivers are once again running high and fast, the geese are aggressively guarding their nests, and we are marking, all signs that the regular academic year is coming to an end. Eventually, there will be green grass and flowers.

Every year for the past two has been exceptional for us in ETFM. In the fall we were all engaged in or affected by job action for the second time in six years. The extended semester resulting from the strike added to everyone’s fatigue and stress. And hovering over everything, the persistent pandemic. Collectively, ETFM members have shown dedication and generosity, helping our students and each other get across the finish line of this endless term. A shoutout also goes to Darlene McWhirter and Anita King who held us together in virtual space, reminding us of crucial deadlines, solving the most intractable problems faced by students and instructors alike, and waiting so patiently for us to figure out how to sign variations of digital forms without throwing our computers out the window in frustration.

We also went through important administrative changes with the retirement of Marianne Harnish after more than two decades as our department admin. In mid-February we welcomed Anca Rotar as our new admin, and as we slowly and safely return to campus over the summer, many more of us will have a chance to say hello to Anca (and everyone else) in person as we walk along the corridors of the 6th floor, Fletcher Argue.

Amid the news of accomplishments and awards that follows, we also include a tribute from Bob O’Kell to a former ETFM Head, Judith Prescott Flynn, who passed away in early May. Many of us remember Judy’s sharp wit and intellectual generosity with great fondness. Judy was both kind and rigorous as a colleague, and the first woman to serve as Head of our department. Our thoughts go out to her family and many friends. We have lost a great spirit.

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**A message from Brenda Austin-Smith, Department Head**

The Late Wisconsin Spring
(an excerpt of a poem)
By John Koethe

Snow melts into the earth and a gentle breeze
Loosens the damp gum wrappers, the stale leaves
Left over from autumn, and the dead brown grass.
The sky shakes itself out. And the invisible birds
Winter put away somewhere return, the air relaxes,
People start to circulate again in twos and threes.

. . . .

A dappled sky, a mild blue
Watercolor light that floats the tense particulars away
As the distraction starts. Spring here is at first so wary,
And then so spare that even the birds act like strangers,
Trying out the strange air with a hesitant chirp or two,
And then subsiding.
For those of us who have not been coming to campus regularly: goose season is here. I’ve been working in my office for a change of scenery, and beyond the odd fortunate sighting of Marianne Harnish and Anca Rotar, all I see are geese: hiding in planters, flaneur-ing through puddles, hissing at me when I get too close while muttering my favourite meme, *Look at this distinguished gentleman, yes yes…* Sometimes I like being alone with the geese for the post-apocalyptic vibes. That said, I’ve had it with these honkers. Enough with Mission Impossible: Goose Protocol. I miss having people, especially our graduate students, safely on campus. An empty campus makes me think back to how isolated I periodically felt during my own graduate studies. When I feel this way I am filled with appreciation for the resilience of our graduate students who have been moving forward in their programs despite world events exacerbating what is, for many, a lonely, anxiety-ridden process. I’m grateful to our seminar instructors and, especially, to Anita King, for providing so much support to our graduate students. Looking ahead to autumn, serious concerns about viral spread remain, especially given the province’s failure to enforce common-sense safety measures. I’m certainly ambivalent about campus opening back up. UMFA is trying to learn exactly what the administration has done to improve on-campus ventilation in advance of opening. I encourage everyone to read about UMFA’s efforts at [http://www.umfa.ca/news/206-safe-air-um-campaign](http://www.umfa.ca/news/206-safe-air-um-campaign) Despite this uncertainty, the past few years reassure me that we will be able to maintain a sense of academic community. I’m very excited for the upcoming pAGES Summer Colloquium. Entitled “Loose Threads,” the colloquium will be held virtually on June 10, 2022. Submissions are due May 15 and can be sent to pages.info@umanitoba.ca The thought of hearing graduate students and instructors sharing their ongoing work certainly gooses my optimism for the future.

**Associate Head's message - Alison Calder**

Hi folks! It’s been quite the year. As we straggle towards the end of term, enduring various weather-related and other indignities, we can look forward to a summer that hopefully includes some space to breathe. Once again, I will be asking department members to read submissions for student essay awards, so I send thanks in advance for that service. But I won’t make any other predictions for next year, since seeing the future has proven to be impossible, and possibly undesirable as well. As always, particular thanks to Darlene for her support of the undergraduate program.

**Graduate Chair's message - Luke Tromly**

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Sometimes I like being alone with the geese for the post-apocalyptic vibes. That said, I’ve had it with these honkers. Enough with Mission Impossible: Goose Protocol. I miss having people, especially our graduate students, safely on campus. An empty campus makes me think back to how isolated I periodically felt during my own graduate studies. When I feel this way I am filled with appreciation for the resilience of our graduate students who have been moving forward in their programs despite world events exacerbating what is, for many, a lonely, anxiety-ridden process. I’m grateful to our seminar instructors and, especially, to Anita King, for providing so much support to our graduate students. Looking ahead to autumn, serious concerns about viral spread remain, especially given the province’s failure to enforce common-sense safety measures. I’m certainly ambivalent about campus opening back up. UMFA is trying to learn exactly what the administration has done to improve on-campus ventilation in advance of opening. I encourage everyone to read about UMFA’s efforts at [http://www.umfa.ca/news/206-safe-air-um-campaign](http://www.umfa.ca/news/206-safe-air-um-campaign) Despite this uncertainty, the past few years reassure me that we will be able to maintain a sense of academic community. I’m very excited for the upcoming pAGES Summer Colloquium. Entitled “Loose Threads,” the colloquium will be held virtually on June 10, 2022. Submissions are due May 15 and can be sent to pages.info@umanitoba.ca The thought of hearing graduate students and instructors sharing their ongoing work certainly gooses my optimism for the future.

Attention everyone!

Spring Convocation will be held in person this year! Our graduates (Faculty of Arts, and Faculty of Graduate Studies with students in Arts) will cross the stage on **Tuesday, June 7th at 3pm**. [More info here.](http://www.umfa.ca/news/206-safe-air-um-campaign)

Convocation will continue to also offer a virtual experience for those who aren’t ready to attend a large in-person gathering or aren’t able to attend in person.
News from, by, and about faculty, staff, and students

**Brenda Austin-Smith**'s essay on Joaquin Phoenix's performance style was recently published in the collection *Stellar Transformations: Movie Stars of the 2010s* (Rutgers UP). Another piece, "'She's So Unusual': The Autist in Stranger Things," appears in *Autism in Film and Television: On the Island* (U of Texas P). She gave two papers online this spring, one at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies, and the other for the Film Studies Association of Canada. Brenda was invited to join the Project Advisory Committee for Courage to Act, a five-year federally funded initiative to prevent and respond to gender-based violence on college and university campuses. Finally, Brenda completed her third and last term as President of the Canadian Association of University Teachers in late April, after six trips in two months to walk picket lines with colleagues on strike in Lethbridge, Alberta and Pointe-de-L'Église, Nova Scotia. She now moves one seat over to become CAUT's Past President.

**Alison Calder** was thrilled to launch her new poetry collection, *Synaptic* (U Regina P) at the beginning of April. Thanks to the expert interviewing skills of Vanessa Warne, conversation ranged from footnotes to nematodes to religious conversion. Alison was sad not to be able to see everyone in person, but happy not to have to share the champagne. ([Link to McNally Robinson interview here](#)).

**Lindsay Diehl** had an article recently published in a special issue of *Canadian Literature*. “Journey to Hoi An: The Theme of Return in Philip Huynh’s *The Forbidden Purple City.*” *Refugee Worldmaking: Canada and the Afterlives of the Vietnam War*. Special Issue of *Canadian Literature*, edited by Y-Dang Troeung and Christine Kim, vol. 246, 2021, pp. 85-105. This article is currently featured on the author spotlight series, [CanLit Author Spotlights](#).

**Dana Medoro**'s book on abortion, *Certain Concealments*, is forthcoming this July. It was a long labor with no epidural. She is thinking of holding a launch for it at the Women’s Health Clinic in the autumn.

Her cat, the Marquis de Lafayette, is very proud of her.


**Grace Paizen**’s article, "The Digitized Museum and the Troubling Reliance on Technology to Manage Knowledge in E.M. Forster's *The Machine Stops,*" will be published in July 2022 in a special issue of the Configurations journal titled, *Science Fiction and the Museum*. The article focuses on digital amnesia further obscuring subjective narratives of museum practice, using Forster's novella to reveal how science fiction warns of digitizing knowledge and how technology now controls us more than we control technology.
Leighton (Tony) Steele passed away on March 27, 2022. He taught English and Creative Writing in our department for many years. Our sincere condolences go out to his family. We respectfully invite you to read the obituary online here.

This academic year, Vanessa Warne has been kept afloat by the resolve and brilliance of EFTM students, by the pluckiness of a picket team captained by David Watt, and by Crafting Communities, a SSHRC-funded collaborative project that continues to feature great work by EFTM graduate students Jessie Krahn and Natalie LoVetri and now welcomes Lucie von Schilling. In the Fall and Winter, Crafting Communities welcomed 36 guest presenters from Canada, the US, the UK, and Australia. These guests shared their academic and creative work in material culture roundtables, in sessions dedicated to hands-on learning in humanities classrooms, and in a series of 6 artists’ talks, one of which featured the extraordinary hand-embroidery work of artist and EFTM-graduate Willow Rector. Vanessa is immensely grateful to her collaborators Dr. Andrea Korda (University of Alberta) and Dr. Mary Elizabeth Leighton (University of Victoria) for their companionship and peer mentorship. She is also grateful to our department for funding to hire students.

Vanessa extends a special thank you to ALL the students of her Fall-term “Paper Worlds” course. This clever and courageous group made moving panoramas, interpreting nineteenth-century literary works by creating slow-moving scrolls of back-lit paper, work they did with the support of guest artist Charlene Van Buekenhout. Their interpretations were as insightful as they were beautiful. Thank you to Aurora Matthews, Thea Wortley, Susanne DuPlooy, Dyna Sanderson, and Rylee McOuat for permission to share this sampling of still images of ENGL 3140’s moving, multisensory adaptations.

Arlene Young, Professor Emeritus, has a piece forthcoming in Victorian Review 47:2 entitled “Bleak House: Once More with Feeling.”
A message from pAGES (our Association of Graduate English Students)

As the end of this term nears, pAGES applauds the courage and dedication of grad students who have continued to research, write, and think throughout another year requiring tremendous flexibility. You are still here, following big questions and lingering in texts – we see you and celebrate all it has taken to stay and still be here. During this past academic year, pAGES has organized monthly Write + Research sessions over Zoom where English graduate students gathered to work alongside each other from afar. We are also organizing a virtual colloquium for June 10th, titled “Loose Threads.” We look forward to seeing many of you there, students and faculty included, to share the projects that have held us this past year, projects that we are perhaps still grasping at threads to pull it all together. Please send your submissions by May 15th to pages.info@umanitoba.ca. Finally, as deadlines potentially ease up for the summer months ahead, we hope this space and slower pace bring new ways to inhabit your work with joyful curiosity and intention. If you have any questions or suggestions about how pAGES might support you as a graduate student, or, as faculty, how pAGES might help navigate your relationships with graduate students, please contact us at the email above.

- Amy-Leigh Gray, pAGES president

A message from EFTSA (our undergraduate students association)

EFTSA has had another busy year, despite the majority of our classes and events remaining online! We feel proud that our team was able to accomplish our shared goal of fostering a sense of community amongst students through academic workshops and social events. We started off the year with a virtual pumpkin carving night, followed by several online movie nights where the funniest commenter received a gift card of their choosing! Throughout the stress of exam season, EFTSA was able to support and encourage students with a variety of gift card giveaways: one to the U of M bookstore and another to a local Winnipeg shop. In February, EFTSA welcomed students back on campus with goodie bags! EFTSA also remained focused on assisting students academically by hosting multiple writing workshops. We would like to extend a special thank-you to Dr. Warne and Dr. Watt who, so graciously, hosted these workshops for our students. We ended off the year with ‘EFTSA FEST’, a virtual film festival featuring short films and video creations from our students. Congrats to all the winners of the festival who each received gift cards to local Winnipeg businesses. Thanks for your support in another wonderful, strange, and busy year!

- Sophie George, EFTSA president
In Memorium
Judith Prescott Flynn

Judith Prescott Flynn began her teaching at St. John’s College in the 1960s, where she had also been an undergraduate and M.A. student, before the faculty members of the College were integrated with those of the University of Manitoba in 1970. There in the larger unit she was at first one of only five women in a Department of English comprising 42 full-time members. A few years later, aware that the criteria for promotion would soon require a Ph.D., Judith made the courageous decision to take a three-year leave of absence and enroll in the doctoral program at the University of Alberta, from which she in due course graduated and then resumed her teaching at U. of M. In doing so, she became a role-model for the young women in her classes that were beginning to think of the possibility of an academic career for themselves, and a mentor to those who did follow her in that path.

Judith was beloved and much admired by her students, who in four decades never had occasion to hear or speak a negative word about her teaching or her personality. As the students’ evaluations indicated, her intelligence, her humour, her sensitivity to other’s needs, her compassion, and her sense of an appropriately Victorian duty were manifest both in the way she prepared her classes, and in the way she delivered them. This, despite the fact that she had high expectations of her students and held high standards in assessing their work. She was an expert on the works of Charles Dickens and was often a valuable and willing source of scholarly critiques for her colleagues, both those in the Department and those she knew from her active participation in the Victorian Studies Association of Western Canada, of which she was a member since its founding in 1972.

Judith was also a marvellous colleague. On both student and faculty committees her judgements reflected the same qualities she brought to her teaching. It was typical of her generosity in that regard that she endowed the annual Prescott book prize in memory of her father for the best student essay in Victorian literature. And Judith could always be relied on to shoulder her full share, and sometimes more, of the collective administrative burden, even though she had family, religious, and social obligations in her life outside the University. She was active every week in the life of her husband’s Anglican parish, and for many years Judith was the Government-appointed Chair of the Manitoba Arts Council, a position of great financial importance in the lives of the creative writers, painters, musicians, sculptors, and other artists who reside in Manitoba. Judith was also an enthusiastic supporter of the Winnipeg Symphony’s Sistema Program in Winnipeg, working for years as a volunteer fundraiser, and as a booster of the program and the young musicians it supported.

All of us who knew Judith during the years of her academic career owed her a debt of gratitude and appreciation for the sacrifice she made in assuming the Headship of the Department (by then including Film and Theatre) at a time when budget constraints, indeed recurrent reductions, so often made the incumbent’s tasks unpleasant. It was an entirely remarkable aspect of Judith’s positive personality and heroic, stubborn determination to make the best of every situation, that one year when we faced a catastrophic reduction in our ability to offer sections of first-year courses, she herself volunteered to teach an overload section for no remuneration, and persuaded many others of us to do so, too. That was typical of her administrative courage. But she was also appreciated as an effective Head, because her good will and efficiency kept us together at a time when it would have been easy to feel aggrieved or alienated by the lack of resources for the mission of the humanities.

Judy Flynn will be remembered by those who knew her well (some of us having enjoyed her friendship for more than 50 years) as a wonderful colleague and teacher and an admirable person of enormous strength, faith, and social conscience. She was endlessly admirable, but what made her also endlessly lovable was that she was a force of nature--absolutely committed to her family, to her teaching, to her students, to issues of social justice, and to the compassionate treatment of those who were subject to discrimination. And she was, with it all, full of fun and full of life. She had a zest for living that was infectious. We are all diminished now that she has left us, and we shall miss her greatly.

Robert O’Kell and Arlene Young
2 May 2022
**Judy Flynn and company: women who have led our department**

Left to right: Judith Owens, Brenda Austin-Smith, Judy Flynn, Arlene Young. All four women served as ETFM Heads. The picture was taken on the occasion of Arlene Young’s retirement party (hosted by Michelle Faubert) in October 2016. Photo credit: Richard Kruk