This summer I heard about an internship at HAVEN, our county’s domestic violence and sexual assault center. I had never thought about an internship before but because of my Women’s Studies courses I was intrigued about an opportunity to see how a non-profit organization who helps primarily women worked. So I got my resumé updated and applied for the position, not knowing what the competition would be like or if I even had a chance. I didn’t even know if I really wanted the position, but something told me I should try. About a week later I had an interview. I came prepared, with an extra copy of my resumé and application in a tidy little folder. My interview went well and I felt even more inspired after learning about this local non-profit agency and everything that they do, which includes counseling for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, advocacy in times of need, emergency temporary housing, and legal assistance to name a few things. I left that day hoping more than ever that I would get the opportunity to work with them. Sure enough, I was notified later that day that HAVEN was offering me their fall internship. I had no idea what other opportunities would open up for me, but I knew that internships had a way of doing that. During my time as an intern I got to know HAVEN employees, did office work, helped with outreach events, and started my eighty hours of training necessary to work with clients. My favorite part was getting to be out in the community, discussing why places like HAVEN exist and how it benefits our area. I attended the Gabrielle Ford presentation in September on MU’s campus and got to meet the acclaimed speaker who had a

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Stop me if you have heard me tell this story before. Of course, if you have heard it, I am not the one who will stop, you will, but when you do, I will fall silent. Thus do readers and writers depend on each other.

Lately, I have been involved in recruiting new students, encouraging them to major in English and Spanish at Mansfield University. Of course, a frequent question that comes up is “What can I do with an English or Spanish major?” In this case “do” means “get a job.” I give them the list and tell them about what some of our graduates are doing. But I have also been thinking of the value of these majors on a more fundamental level when it comes to working.

I have been unemployed twice in my adult life, and each occurrence says something about what it means to major in English or another language. It may, however, say as much about the kind of person who chooses to major in a discipline so focused on products of the imagination.

The first time I was unemployed, fresh out of graduate school, I had had a teaching job, but it lasted only a year. Jobs were scarce and I was lucky to get that one year appointment. After it ended, I got a job working on the railroad. This was not so strange since I came from a railroad family, but I ended up in labor relations, about which I knew very little. They wanted someone to help write and revise labor agreements, and they thought I could help with the sentence structure and grammar. My real talent, however, turned out to be more valuable. Once I became familiar with the labor agreements and how they worked, I was able to imagine how things could be different, and then critique my imaginary world. Does that sound familiar, thinking about the implications of imaginative texts?

I was promoted and transferred four times, and each time I would imagine ways to do things differently. When I took over as a regional manager of labor relations, I had a problem: the people in my offices were used to being evaluated based on how well they resolved complaints. I wanted them to prevent complaints, and while it was easy to count up complaints and determine how many were settled and what it cost, it was harder to measure effectiveness at preventing them. What I ultimately did was ask my subordinates to tell stories, to write 300 to 500 word essays about how they had made things better. This, too, should sound familiar. Thus we were able to document what had been done, and I had stories to tell when someone asked what my offices had contributed.

The second time I became unemployed was when I decided, despite my success on the railroad, that I did not want to continue. So my family (my wife also studied English) and I imagined another option, a crazy one. We would move to the country, we would grow much of our own food, I would write and try to get some work teaching, and we would live simply. So we bought an old farm house in Tioga County, sold our house outside of Philadelphia, I quit my...
In fond memory of…

MOON

In the woods I walk through on some bright nights, the moon is ground light attaching shadow to shadow,

but in the corridors of my father’s chemo ward, it showed up again and again as a child.

A four-year-old traveled by the open door of Dad’s room each treatment, riding the wheeled feet of his I.V. unit, hand on the pole and leaning out, like a captain from his mast, bald head sheltered in a purple-lettered gray and orange stocking cap that would strike the Queer Eye guys blind, that Dad had brought in by the dozen from his rough-hewn rural golf club.

The boy waved. “Hey, sunshine,” Dad said, then threw up as they opened the port in his chest to pump in a few more days. And the moon is Dad’s face, too, that last good-bye, puffed yet familiar. Bending to embrace him, I, in blue collar blasphemy, kissed his cheek.

The moon’s dark eyes can glow. The moon’s oh of a mouth can clench, struggling to hold in place all this love. God help me to accept whatever way the light at the end of any long walk leads us home.

Bruce Barton (1953-2012)
for its excellent English program. While I was there, I took three classes, which are the equivalent of five classes at Mansfield. I enrolled in “Angels, Madwomen, and Whores: Nineteenth Century Women’s Writing,” “Shakespeare in Depth,” and “Reading Ireland in the 1990s: Fiction, Poetry, Drama.” These were my top three choices because they fit a Mansfield requirement, were not offered at Mansfield, or were specific to Ireland. The classes were organized into two hours of lecture and one hour of seminar, all of which were completed within one day. This was something I had to get used to – sitting in class for three hours on Monday was far different from one hour on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday in ways both good and bad. My professors were all incredible teachers and mentors. They challenged me to do some of my best work, and they

Sigma Tau Delta
Mansfield's local chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the international English honor society, offers high-achieving students an opportunity to participate in academic, extracurricular, and community service endeavors that enrich the students in a variety of ways. Membership includes opportunities to apply for scholarships, attend and present work at conferences, and publish work in the organization’s scholarly and creative journals. In order to qualify for membership, students must be enrolled at Mansfield as an English major, an English minor, or a Creative Writing minor. They must also achieve a 3.3 grade point average and have completed at least three semesters of college. Each fall and spring, Dr. Kristin Sanner, the society's faculty advisor, contacts eligible students and invites them to join.

For more information, contact Dr. Sanner at: ksanner@mansfield.edu
our assignments (in Afghanistan, anyway) with two prized possessions: a shiny, new three-speed black Raleigh bicycle (the envy of every other of the thousands of commuter cyclists who circled the mountain daily) and a book locker. This latter was a small cardboard bookcase that contained 100 paperbacks, everything from Dr. Spock to Plato. Each locker’s contents varied, but the one I inherited included a slim book called *Justine* by an author I had never hear of—Lawrence Durrell.

Before my first major trip out of Kabul, north to Kunduz and Mazar-i-Sharif, I browsed the bookcase for reading material for the road and chose *Justine* mostly for the exotic cover and jacket blurb. In Kunduz, I bought a small, tattered piece of carpet, a prayer rug. And then we headed across the unmarked desert, six to a taxi, landing five hours later in the historic border area of ancient Balkh. It was August, and Independence Day celebrations were in progress, but by then I was hooked on *Justine*. All I wanted to do was sit on my prayer rug and absorb the images of Alexandria (After all, Alexander had also gone through the very place where I sat, with his only wife, Roxanne, a daughter of the Hindu Kush). While my fellow travelers saw the sights and sipped tea with dignitaries, I read aloud Durrell’s poetic prose, sinking into the melody of its language. The story held my interest, but there was something more, a subtle undercurrent of words and sounds that mesmerized me. For the first time, literature took on a new meaning; the fullness of its potential to communicate startled me.

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**A Family Affair: Racing through Harry Potter**

—Lynn Pifer

Most of my reading experiences are solitary affairs. If they are particularly good experiences, I inflict them on others by talking about them or adding the works to a future course syllabus. Having children meant I could read aloud to my girls, (or listen to my husband read aloud) – no one reads the heffalump chapter of *Winnie the Pooh* better) just as my parents and older brothers once read to me. By the time my eldest was ready for Harry Potter, however, she was ready to read it by herself. She and I took turns reading books one through six, and, to our horror, we realized that book
seven was finally due to hit the shelves while we would be away visiting Aunt Julie in Manhattan.

We needn’t have worried. Julie took us to the biggest Barnes and Nobles we’d ever seen, and we snagged a copy and started reading right there in the store. When we got back to our hotel room, my lovely and usually loving child insisted on having the book all to herself. But I could stay awake longer than she could, and so, each night I snuck Harry Potter and The Deathly Hallows out from under her pillow and read until I could no longer keep my eyes open. The rest of the family insisted that we leave the hotel room during the day, but for the two or three nights it took to get through the book, there were two racing bookmarks keeping our places. One morning, my husband, who can stay up later than any of us, announced that he’d read the end already, and that Harry Potter dies. This little bit of Dad humor was not appreciated; he should have stuck to heffalump jokes.

**John Hancock’s Lord of the Flies**

—Bill Keeth

John Hancock started the first day of my fifth grade class by recognizing that he experienced an extra degree of enjoyment when he signed documents, yet stressed that he was in fact not the first person to sign the Declaration of Independence. By mid-semester, he confirmed that this would be no everyday class and he no ordinary teacher. Without warning, Mr. Hancock announced a week long experiment in self-government accompanied by his self-imposed classroom absence. Essentially, we were given a package of assignments and corresponding goals and then left to fend for ourselves, unmonitored. How far would we get in a week of self-paced education? This, indeed, was the very circumstance in which I began reading Edgar Rice Burroughs’s The Mad King. I was assigned a couple of chapters as a minimal goal, finishing the book as an ultimate goal. And so, somewhere in that room, which many times resembled the worst of William Golding’s marooned student island, I entered the world of the chivalrous Barney Custer. Although admittedly I didn’t reach the end goal until sometime later, I did learn something significant: reading was “as” if not “more” exciting than even the most exaggerated classroom wilds.

Ireland: Study Abroad through ISEP

helped me get over the differences between American schools and Irish schools.

Some of my best experiences in Ireland, however, were outside of school. Because my three classes each met on one day, I had long weekends. One thing Ireland taught me was to prioritize my work. If I got my work done during the week, I could go anywhere I wanted over my long weekends, and I did. Almost every weekend, I went someplace new.

Coleraine is in Northern Ireland and is very close to the northeastern coast. Much of my exploration was along the Giant’s Causeway: a stunning coastline, which includes far more than the hexagonal rock formations you will find in pictures online. I also made time to visit Dublin, which was an easy five-hour train ride away. I even had the opportunity to see my favorite band from home — Enter The Haggis — perform in Skerries, a small town just outside of Dublin. Arguably, the best part of my stay in Ireland was my final two weeks during which I traveled around the whole of Ireland with my sister and my cousin. When they arrived, the sun came out, and it did not rain once during our travels. This is very strange for Irish weather, and we utilized every minute of it.

I did all this and more during my stay, sometimes alone and sometimes with friends with whom I stay in touch. To be honest, I am glad to be home, but I miss Coleraine, and I would go back in a heartbeat if given the chance. Studying abroad is an adventure everyone should take — it opens your eyes to new cultures and educations. My only advice is this: never study abroad purely for the classes or purely for the travel because the experience would be incomplete. You must both expect to learn and to immerse yourself in a fascinating culture. Take classes that are not offered at every other university, and explore as much as you can. I will never forget my wonderful time in Coleraine, Ireland, and I strongly suggest study abroad to anyone interested in world cultures and travel.
My most memorable experience with reading

—Louise Sullivan-Blum

I was nineteen. It was a Saturday afternoon and I was curled up in an armchair by the window on the fourth floor of the college library, immersed in my book. It was Absalom, Absalom by William Faulkner, and I was reading it for an English class. It was my first experience with Faulkner. In high school, I had fallen in love with Hemingway, whom I discovered on my own in the mildewed hardcovers I bought for a quarter at library book sales. I was enamored of his short sentences, his terse descriptions. I wrote story after story in daggered prose, attempting to emulate his clippered speech, his manly nonchalance, though I have to admit that it wasn't working for me. But I kept on trying, laboring to curb my errant, wordy tongue, because I thought that this was how you wrote a book, and writing a book was the only thing I had ever truly wanted in my life. I'd spent my youth imagining the novel I would write one day: the feel of it in my hands, the smell of its pages, the letters of my name, stamped in gold on the binding for the rest of time. I wanted my book on the shelves in the library, the place where I had spent my childhood, working my way through the stacks, alphabetically, author by author, world by world.

Sunlight streamed through the windows, bathing everything it touched in an ambient glow. Faulkner's writing mesmerized me like an opiate, page after page of prose that pulled me deeper and deeper into a plot that spiraled on and on. His sentences rambled on like trains, every subject a hundred clauses from its object, long, long strings of words that wrapped themselves around me, fused with the brilliant rays of light that illuminated the room, obliterating Hemingway and his suddenly puerile concerns like a nuclear blast.

I don't remember the words; I barely remember the plot. What I remember is the experience of that quiet afternoon: the sudden knowledge, absolute as truth, that I would be a writer, that I was called to it as if by God.

I would write a book. This was Faulkner's gift to me.
Oppunities and Open Doors

(Continued from page 1)

lots to say on the subject of bullying. She had been through so much and had the courage to talk to us and many other campuses about the effects of long term violence. I had my internship for about a month before I was offered the position of Outreach Coordinator. Now I get to talk to people within the community, raise awareness about domestic violence and sexual assault, coordinate outreach events, and help lead our new youth organization, RYOT against Violence, which encourages young adults to not accept violence and to make changes in their communities and schools. During the month of October, which was Domestic Violence Awareness Month, I worked with other staff to encourage community members to learn more about the epidemic and to wear purple to support the cause. Some of MU’s faculty even got involved and wore purple to help us raise awareness. Not only am I thankful to HAVEN for the opportunities I have been given, but I’m proud of the work I’m doing. This all came from an internship I wasn’t even sure I wanted, but I took a chance that ended up opening doors for me. It’s amazing that a last minute decision to apply for an internship turned into a career path that I would never have thought of otherwise. I hope I can inspire more students to reach for opportunities and take chances; you never know where an open door will lead.