

SARAH PAPE, MANAGING EDITOR

INTERVIEWED BY KATIE ANDERSON

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Can you tell us a bit about the origin of the *Watershed Review*?

Here's a blog post written by the founder of *Watershed*, retired professor, Ellen Walker, who says it more beautifully than I ever could: <https://watershedcsuc.wordpress.com/history/>

How long have you been in charge of the magazine?

In the spring of 2012, a group of graduate students took up the challenge of bringing *Watershed* back. It had been on hiatus since the 2008 budget cuts, which also suspended our Certificate in Literary Editing and Publishing. The desire was to save some part of the literary publishing history at CSU, Chico. *Watershed* put out two print issues a year since 1977 and we wanted to ensure it would continue to have a presence in the world, both campus-wide and nationally. I stepped in as faculty advisor, secured funding for website design, worked with students to create a new look and mission, and within a year, we put out the first digital issue of what was now named, *Watershed Review*. We were able to bring back one course, English 415: Editing Literary Magazines, that would support the ongoing development of the magazine and this spring, we'll be publishing our eleventh issue (<http://www.csuchico.edu/watershed/archive/2010s/>). Once you've taken the course, there are internship and employment opportunities. With all of these moving parts, I've become the Managing Editor/Instructor/Advisor to many amazing offshoots and projects.

What do you enjoy best about the publishing process?

As most editors will say, the discovery of new, compelling writing is a complete and utter thrill. I'd add that this feeling of excitement is exponential when experiencing it alongside students each semester. I get to appreciate the process of reviewing, selecting, and editing stellar poems, short stories, and essays, and then the pleasure of sharing the collection we've curated with a nation-wide readership. There's really nothing like it.

What are some of the things your past 415 students have accomplished?

Former editors of *Watershed Review* have gone on to MFA programs, gotten jobs in book publishing, journalism, web editing, freelance editing, non-profit work, education, real estate, and entrepreneurship, just to name a few. There's more to being an editor than copyediting. Working collaboratively, reading texts closely, communicating clearly with others—all of these practices translate well to a variety of jobs, internships, and professional opportunities.

What does this class have to offer incoming and currently attending students?

English 415 is a chance for students to see what other professional options an English major can offer. It is a hands-on, project-based course using real world material to create something of beauty and intellectual merit. Many students have commented that it doesn't "feel like a class" because we are working closely as a community of practitioners. Everything learned is immediately applied to the work that we do.

Can you talk a little bit about the *Weatherbeaten* magazine?

Weatherbeaten is a literary magazine created by four former *Watershed Review* editors, Nicholas Monroe, Kris Wheat, Nathan Sandoval, and Matt Skripek. They've put out two issues

so far, using a digital platform, and have published quality writing that speaks directly to the issues and concerns of our current moment. These are all graduates of our Masters program, walking the walk out in the world. Collectively they worked as poetry editors, prose editors, Editors-in-Chief, web editors, paid assistants, and many represented WR at our national conference, Associated Writers and Writing Programs (AWP). They offer a strong case for how this work parlays in the world outside of the university.

What advice would you give to anyone interested in submitting something to be reviewed for the magazine?

One of the first things I impart to English 415 students is how to become a discerning reader of literary magazines. My own submission process became a lot more streamlined once I did the research and discovered literary magazines that might be more amenable to my work than others. Many writers make the mistake of thinking that you have to get published by a top tier publication for it to mean anything, but there is a universe of literary publications out there to join up with—ones that will provide you with a readership, a community of fellow writers, and a platform for your work. The question I encourage them to ask themselves is, “What kinds of literary/cultural conversations do I want to be a part of and who is creating a space for those conversations?” Do your research. Revise and polish your writing. Rejection is just part of the process.