Introducing the ASA newsletter
by Wendy Roque
Avenger News Editor

It is my pleasure to introduce the inaugural issue of The Avenger. When I first started working at ASA in February 2010 I felt that something was missing in the Manhattan and Brooklyn campuses and I couldn’t figure out what. When I started to think back to my college days and the fond memories, many things came to mind. In particular was wanting to find out what was going on in my college community. As an undergrad many, many, many years ago I used to pick up a copy of The Statesmen, my alma mater’s newspaper and would peruse the paper to see what was happening.

Since the newspaper was written by students I always felt that it covered news that I was interested in. “Fostering community” is our mission with this newsletter. We aim to bridge the gap between students, instructors and all areas of ASA life.

This is your newspaper and your voice! We want to hear what you think. We are looking for writers, artists, and contributors of all kinds. The Avenger meets every Tuesday at 12 pm in room 400, at 383 Pearl Street, Brooklyn.

You will be welcomed with open arms!

Happy reading.

Avenger Man with ASA
President Alex Shchegol
INTERVIEW WITH WRITING PROFESSOR MARGARITA DELCHEVA

The Division of Arts and Sciences has welcomed several bright, new faculty members this semester. One of them, Margarita Delcheva (poet, writer, and editor) sat down with us in The Writing Center to discuss literary life and teaching. We discussed her current classes at ASA and literature in the electronic world.

MH: Hi, Margarita. Thanks so much for taking the time out to talk to me today. Welcome to ASA. I thought we could start off by talking about teaching. What is your favorite thing about teaching writing?

MD: My favorite thing about teaching is ‘surprise.’ My students always surprise me by their reactions to texts or materials we are studying. While I always plan my classes, students help shape the class more than me a lot of the time. I find that challenging but also really interesting.

MH: What do you hope your students gain in a writing class by the end of the semester?

MD: In Comp. I, we are doing a lot of reading. I’m really hoping that they really gain an appreciation of how literature and writing can play a great role in their lives. A lot of students come in on the first day and say how they don’t like reading or writing, so I am hoping that they gain some sort of appreciation of how reading and writing can be fun. With College Writing, it is very different. We are talking about grammar, sentence structure and organization in writing. I think that grammar exercises can be fun and not just tedious.

MH: Do you think that your students will become more confident by the end of the semester?

MD: Definitely. Even after the first couple of weeks, I see improvement in how they feel about language. I can see some really getting into it, and I am hoping that others will join them soon.

MH: That sounds wonderful. So you’re a writer. Tell me a little bit about your writing. Who is Margarita, the writer?

MD: I went to NYU for my MFA. We had great faculty (including Sharon Olds, Phillis Levin and Charles Simic) who ended up being important and influential in my work. Apart from that, I think I entered my MFA program with great expectations about what poetry or writing should do or how the writer should plan what to tell the reader. That sort of disappeared over those two years, and I found out that the best way to approach writing is to let it be its own thing and not try to control it. I think that was the biggest illusion that evaporated for me. Just really trying to be concrete in what we write and write images rather than ideas because the ideas are contained in images and situations we write about. Apart from the great faculty that taught me all of that, being around the other MFA students fostered some long-term relationships. I mean, I met my husband there. Also, I met some of the editors with whom I’m working on Paperbag Journal.

MH: Tell me a little about Paperbag. What is it? How would you describe it?

MD: Paperbag is an online experiment in the way that it gives a stage for experiment. We don’t only publish poetry and art.

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We also publish video and sound experiments or collaborations between writers. In fact, we encourage our fans to submit collaborations. We not only include a lot of them, we also have a Paperbag blog, which sets another stage for more collaboration to happen. For example, on the blog we even give certain collaboration prompts that the fans respond to. It’s sort of a parallel reality, the journal and the blog, and we try to keep up both at the same time. You can find it at www.paperbagazine.com

MH: Very cool. Paperbag is online, and a lot of other journals are going in that direction. Electric Literature, for example, has also made a big splash. In today’s electronic society and fast-paced world, does literature matter? Does literature have a place in today’s society?

MD: I hope so. I mean, it has a place in my life. And I hope that a lot of people feel that way too. As an editor for an online publication, I see all of the advantages that online publishing gives us. It’s free, it’s fast, it can reach a lot of people, but at the same time, it’s more likely to be easily dismissed. So when you are browsing, and you click away from here to there, you can be led from one place to another without ever stopping to notice and sort of mindfully engage with the work you are reading. I even find myself sometimes reading an online journal and reading two lines from a poem and then clicking to another poem. It is a very different experience from a having a physical object in your hand that is a book and that actually has weight. I think that weight is not only physical, it is also metaphorical. Turning the pages is a physical and a mental act.

MH: It’s almost like literature and reading forces us to slow down. Everything with the Internet is fast, fast, fast, and printed material does make us slow down the pace. Has it changed the ways students think, the way that they perceive the written word?

MD: I do notice the impact on students. There is an expectation from students that everything should be entertaining. The way we interact with social media, our attention is just about three seconds long. What it’s focused on is not entertaining; it’s just about becoming lethargic and looking out the window for another three second fix. I hope that students understand that everything can’t be entertaining without doing hard work.

MH: What do you have coming up in your classes that you are most excited about?

MD: I really love the Marquez story, “ A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings.” I’m really looking forward to reading it in about two weeks in my Comp. I class. I’m really looking forward to talking about magical realism with my students.

MH: Where can students find you outside of class?

MD: They can find me at the Writing Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11–1. I look forward to seeing them there.
Welcome to the ASA Libraries

by Anne Swain, Library Director

I’m sure each of us has had some experience with libraries in our life before ASA College. In addition to the resources and services those libraries offered, the librarians probably created the experiences that you remember. The ASA libraries have an excellent collection of resources and a wide array of services. The ASA libraries have almost 20,000 physical volumes, over 80,000 full text electronic books, and 26 electronic databases full of full text journal articles. The ASA libraries have wifi, copy machines and computers. The ASA libraries give workshops on a variety of information topics. The ASA libraries are recognized as Advanced Electronic Doorway Libraries by the New York State Education Department, the Board of Regents and the New York State Library. They are an affiliate member of the National Network of Libraries of Medicine and a member of METRO and WALDO.

However, in this article I’d like to describe one of the eight librarians who make the ASA libraries a special place. His name is Ted Bloom. Ted earned his B.A. in Communications, and MLS in Library Science and an MSEd. in Vocational Technical Education. Ted has NY State Teaching Certification in Communications Media and is a New York State Certified Public Librarian. Ted publishes a monthly Internet review column for the Queens Gazette both in hard copy and online called Internet in Bloom. In addition, Ted is a YMCA Certified Fitness Specialist.

Ted is the ASA Brooklyn Evening Librarian. You may have seen him running around, assisting students as he closes the Brooklyn library at 151 Lawrence Street Monday through Friday. His favorite hobby? Stamp collecting? Crossword puzzles? Book-of-the-month Club member? None of the above, although he is an American Library Association member and loves to read. Instead, he belongs to the largest Krav Maga organization in the world: The IKMF, International Krav Maga Federation. Krav Maga translates in English to contact combat. It is a martial art created by the State of Israel in 1948 to defeat the Nazis who succeeding in killing over 10 million innocent people. It keeps him out of trouble on the weekends. The art is really a combination of several famous martial styles such as: Muay Thai Kickboxing, Ju-Jutsu and Karate. What makes it so popular is how it economizes movement to cause maximum damage with minimum effort. There is nothing graceful or showy involved. You won’t see Krav Maga being used to score points in the Olympics. However, it is ideal to use when one has little room to move, such as on the subway or bus where kicking may not be an option.

Ted and the rest of the library staff welcome you to the ASA libraries.
ASA HOSTS FIRST SPORTS PEP RALLY

by Lamar Carter
Asst. Sports Information Director

Overcast skies and the threat of rain didn’t stop the ASA College from hosting its first Pep Rally on October 14. Organized by Dean of Students Derek Jackson, the Rally featured the ASA Avengers Football Team, as well as the premiere of the new ASA Cheerleaders and “Avenger Man,” the school’s mascot.

The event began with the Football team leading a procession from the Lawrence Street building, down Willoughby & Jay Streets and into Tillary Park. Once everyone was settled inside the park, the cheerleaders began the festivities, performing a short cheer/step routine for the crowd. Those in attendance were also treated to words of encouragement from Football Head Coach Dennis Orlando, Director of Academic Affairs Gloria Longakit, Athletic Admissions Officer Damian (a former Avenger Football player), and Criminal Justice Chair Oscar Odom III.

The rally also had some lighter moments. Football led the way with the Tug Of War battles (O-Line vs. D-Line, RBs vs. LBs) – with the winning sides gloating very enthusiastically. The marquee matchup pitted Coaches vs. Administration, with the Coaches winning and sending the players into a frenzy. Avenger Man was the talk of the event as the mascot - sporting ALL purple and black Football gear – worked to energize and excite the crowd throughout the afternoon.

The Rally was certainly a success, and plans are already being made to host a Winter version for Basketball and Track & Field. We hope to see you there...GO ASA!

TUG OF WAR
By Mike Powers,
Avenger Staff Writer

Martin Hyatt is the founding coordinator of the Writing Center at ASA, as well as a professor of writing and composition. An award winning writer, he is the author of the novels *A Scarecrow’s Bible* and *Beautiful Gravity*, and the forthcoming memoir *Greyhound Boy, 1976*. He was kind enough to talk with me about the Writing Center and the role it plays in the ASA community.

**AN INTERVIEW**

**MP:** Tell me a little bit about how your work as a writer connects or coincides with your work as a teacher.

**MH:** Let me just say that I can’t imagine writing all day, so it’s important for me to get outside of myself. Teaching allows me to do that. Because of my work at ASA, I appreciate moments of solitude outside of school, which can lead to creative thought.

**MP:** When did the Writing Center get started at ASA, and what was its mission at that time?

**MH:** I proposed the Writing Center in the fall of 2005, and it was up and running for the spring of 2006. I wanted to create a more academic writing culture at the college. The mission was to both provide extra support for students struggling with writing and to foster continued excellence with already proficient writers, as well as to create more awareness within the school of the importance of writing.

**MP:** How has that mission developed or changed over the years?

**MH:** As all students still take Composition II at the Brooklyn campus, we continue to place a great deal of emphasis on working with those students. However, we also continue to reach out to students at all levels and in all classes to provide support. While we still have classroom visits to the Writing Center, the most recent focus has been on working with students with disabilities and on workshops covering a wide variety of topics.

**MP:** Can you tell me a bit more about those workshops?

**MH:** Yes, we’re very excited about our upcoming workshops. Students continue to need reinforcement of skills that they’ve learned, including APA formatting and original research writing. Our workshops over the next couple of weeks will focus on these two areas. I’m planning other workshops, closer to midterm, focusing on dealing with the stress that can come along with completing several written assignments in a short period of time. Often, what we find in the Writing Center is that students have a psychological block regarding starting or completing a paper assignment. Many times, after talking to someone in the Writing Center, students realize that they do have the words and the capacity to complete an assignment they’ve been struggling with. Seeing them realize this is a wonderful thing.

**MP:** Okay, one last question: What advice can you offer to students on how to best take advantage of the resources the Writing Center offers?

**MH:** First, I would say don’t be intimidated or shy about scheduling a Writing Center appointment. Everyone has certain areas of their writing that they have to work harder to perfect. If you’re struggling with something basic, we can help you with that. If you consider yourself to be an advanced writer and simply want some feedback on your work, we are happy to provide that as well. In the Writing Center we strive to maintain a safe and warm environment, where everyone is welcome and encouraged to be creative and to help strengthen their identities as writers.

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