

28th annual Occam's Razor emphasizes the Great Recession

The latest issue of "Occam's Razor" debuted June 7 at a party in the Biella Room of the University Library. This annual magazine, published by the English Department, features award-winning short fiction and poetry by Cal State East Bay students.

This, the 28th annual magazine, includes several stories that resonate with the Great Recession, and one that takes a caustic view of a sterile and mechanistic future, among others.

Within the 74 pages are the winning entries in the department's three major contests: the Helen DeClercq Poetry Contest, Donald Markos Poetry Contest, and the Robert V. Williams Fiction Writing Contest.

Markos, who taught English from 1966 to 1999, launched the first "Occam's Razor" in 1989 to showcase poetry and fiction written in creative writing classes and by students throughout the University, as well as work from art students.

By the second edition, the magazine was publishing prize-winning fiction. And, by 2005, it added the winners of the department's two poetry contests.

Markos has remained at the helm of the magazine, with limited assistance from a few English majors. Jacob Fuchs, English professor emeritus and published novelist, judged this year's fiction. Lucille Lang Day, a published poet and founder and director of Scarlet Tanager Books, judged the Don Markos entries, and a committee of English faculty evaluated the DeClercq submissions.

"Doing 'Occam's Razor' is part of my continuing teaching mission," said Markos.

Despite the time commitment, he finds the project stimulating, and enjoys the continued contact with colleagues, students, and staff.

He credits Susan Gubernat, associate professor of English, Grace Munakata, professor of art, and Kirk LeClaire, art lecturer, with valuable, on-going assistance.

Several of the authors published in the new "Razor" read their work at the party.