

The St. Norbert College
Office of Faculty Development
invites you to attend

Spotlight On Scholarship **A Sabbatical Report**

Throughout the year we will host a series of presentations to recognize professional achievement in scholarship and to celebrate the rich diversity and talents of our colleagues.

This Spotlight on Scholarship features

John Pennington
Professor of English

2008 Donald B. King Distinguished Scholar Award Recipient

George MacDonald's *At the Back of the North Wind*:
A Critical Edition to Rehabilitate a Literary Reputation

Why is a raven like a writing desk? Well, you probably won't find out the answer at this presentation. But you will discover that George MacDonald (1825-1905)—poet, preacher, novelist, fantasist, and fairy-tale writer—influenced his friend Lewis Carroll and that the children's fantasy novel, *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871) is indebted to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and that *North Wind* became an influence on *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872). If you have a desire to attend a mad tea party, then please find some time to participate in John's sabbatical report.

John's sabbatical project is to create a critical, definitive edition of *At the Back of the North Wind*, with textual annotations that help illuminate the text and explain obscure details that a contemporary reader may not understand, such as examining the textual variants of the novel. Furthermore, the project will provide the contextual material that places the novel in its historical time period and will contain central critical studies on the novel. Such a critical edition is designed to be used in the classroom, primarily in colleges and universities.

Much of John's presentation, however, will detail the reasons *why* such an edition of MacDonald's fantasy is needed: to rehabilitate MacDonald's reputation. John will discuss how Christian fundamentalists, ironically guided by C. S. Lewis's assessment of MacDonald, have appropriated the author, marginalizing him from the Victorian canon and creating a false conservative identity for a very radical thinker and writer. That's why a raven is like a writing desk, isn't it?

Thursday, March 12, 2009
11:00 – 11:50
Union Shield Room



The Office of Faculty Development will provide light refreshments.