

The ^{ETFL} Beacon

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The Newsletter of the Department of English, Theatre, and Foreign Languages at UNC Pembroke

Department of English, Theatre, and Foreign
Languages
The University of North Carolina at Pembroke

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Dennis Sigmon Springs into Retirement

BY BRIGITTE KNIGHT

After 38 years with the English, Theatre, and Foreign Languages Department, Dr. Dennis Sigmon has announced that he will retire at the end of the Spring 2014 semester. Reflecting during an interview on his nearly four decades as a professor at UNCP, Dr. Sigmon says that he is “most proud” of the “little differences” he has made in the lives of others. One of his favorite passages in “Tintern Abbey” is when William Wordsworth refers to the “best portion of a good man’s life” as the “little, nameless, unremembered, acts / Of kindness and of love.” Dr. Sigmon is reminded of these lines when he runs into his former students who tell him that one of his classes made a difference to them.



Dennis Sigmon in 1979 ... and in 2013

However, Dr. Sigmon’s colleagues praise this modest man as a dedicated and outstanding teacher, mentor, and leader who was instrumental as former chair in managing and guiding our department through significant growth.

Dr. Sigmon began teaching at UNCP in the fall of 1976 after receiving his Ph.D. from Purdue University. Professionally, Dr. Sigmon feels as though he “lucked into a lot of things that made a difference” in his career. For example, he was asked a couple of years after coming to Pembroke to serve as adviser for the yearbook at a time when “there was not really a culture of making it a substantive” publication. However, by the time Sara Oswald took over the *Indianhead* as adviser in the fall of 1988, Dr. Sigmon had worked with students to get the yearbook “in a good place” by improving the copy and layout and developing thematic features. He was also asked to co-direct the North Carolina Writing Project at Pembroke, a competitive, professional development program open to teachers from all grade levels and subject areas to improve the teaching of writing in schools. He served as co-director for nearly a decade.

During a time of tremendous growth at UNCP, Dr. Sigmon served as department chair from 2001 to 2009. The hallmark of his accomplishments as chair was managing effectively the impact of increased student enrollment on our department. To meet enrollment demands, the number of Composition

English ETFL



1980: Dennis Sigmon uses the blackboard to illustrate a point for his composition students. Remember blackboards?



2003: Dennis points to the word "English" in the plaque at the entrance to the library, which provided temporary office space for the department chair and administrative staff in 2003-4, when the Dial Building was closed due to mold.



2008: Dennis presents certificates to seniors at the annual dinner for graduating English majors.

and General Education courses that our department offered increased as did the number of faculty to teach these additional classes. The scheduling of morning and early afternoon classes also expanded to include classes later in the day. Another notable addition during this period of phenomenal growth is that the department began to offer programs for the Spanish major and ESL licensure.

Dr. Sigmon was also at the helm during the mold period of 2003 when the Dial Building was closed for an entire year. Looking back, Dr. Sigmon remarks that even though faculty and classes were scattered all across campus, "there was still a sense of unity in the department" and "people worked together to get it figured out so that things could go on fairly smoothly." The department handled "the crisis" well and never "missed a beat as far as holding classes." Dr. Kay McClanahan, our current department chair, remembers fondly: "[Dennis] led us through the year that we were vagabonds due to the mold and kept us from despairing in spite of being without offices or familiar classrooms. He even wrote 'mold carols' for us, which he had printed in little song books for each of us, and we sang them at the Christmas party. They were brilliant, as are so many of the products of his incredibly clever and creative mind, products which we continue to enjoy at a variety of events such as majors' meetings and faculty gatherings."

In addition to his many years of service, Dr. Sigmon has taught a wide range of undergraduate and graduate courses, such as World Literature, British Literature, British Romantic Poetry, Teaching of Writing, English Usage, and Sentence Mastery. Dr. Monika Brown reports that Dr. Sigmon is "well respected by students and colleagues for his demanding courses and dedication to student learning. His courses challenge students to grow and take responsibility--as readers and writers and future teachers." However, despite his best efforts, Dr. Sigmon observes that sometimes it is easy "to feel like a failure" when students are not successful, but as teachers, we have to realize these feelings are "irrational" because we "have helped." He notes that no matter the profession, there are always "going to be people who don't put much effort into something [we] see is worth the effort, and [we] just have to learn to deal with that."

Over the years, Dr. Sigmon says he has developed a "real attachment to the importance of freshman composition." He particularly enjoys the "newness of the freshmen coming in." As he points out, "It's their first semester of college, and composition is probably a course that makes a big difference for them in terms of their transitioning into college." Early in his career at Pembroke, one of his composition students wrote on his end of the semester evaluation, "At PSU, Dr. Sigmon has found his niche," and Dr. Sigmon wholeheartedly agrees.

Another aspect of teaching freshman composition that Dr. Sigmon has found rewarding is watching the transformation of college students. He comments, "One of the special things I've always felt about this place is that when I see a student as a freshman and I see that same student walking across the platform at graduation, I see a real difference. . . . We have had a lot of students

One of Dennis Sigmon's innovations as chair was the resurrection of the department newsletter, which had ceased publication in the late 1970s. Dennis appointed a newsletter committee in Fall 2005, and the first edition of *The ETL Beacon* appeared at the end of the Spring 2006 semester. The lead article in that inaugural issue was Dennis's "Letter from the Chair," in which he summarized his vision for the publication and the department.



Originally designed as an annual print publication, *The Beacon* now appears twice a year in PDF format; copies of all issues can be read and /or downloaded by clicking on the [News](#) link on the department webpage. The publication's goals remain unchanged from the ones articulated by Dennis in the first issue: to be "informative and interesting" and to "maintain a bridge between our department and our various constituencies."

for whom just the college atmosphere and college experience has made a psychological difference in their lives.”

Dr. Sigmon is retiring during a time of funding cuts and reported waning interest in the humanities, but he is confident that the humanities will continue to remain relevant. Although there may be ongoing “practical trouble,” such as “funding” and “jobs,” he is not concerned that the humanities will no longer be valued. In fact, he mentions that there is “real value” in enhancing the experience of STEM majors with the addition of courses in the humanities. To remain relevant, Dr. Sigmon also suggests that it is “important that we help our students who come through our department to see the importance of a variety of kinds of reading for their own lives” and the value of effective communication skills, particularly writing.

When asked how he would like his colleagues and students to remember his time at UNCP, Dr. Sigmon replied that he hopes that he will be remembered as a “combination of taking [his] work seriously but not being too serious.” He believes the image most students have of him is that he is “serious about his standards” and expectations, but he is still “laid back in class and always happy to laugh and enjoy something somebody has said.”

His colleagues agree that Dr. Sigmon has a delightful sense of humor. Dr. McClanahan remembers that during the first faculty meeting she attended



"And the survey says ..." At the Fall 2013 majors meeting, Dennis Sigmon emceeds his own version of *Family Feud*, one of many witty entertainments he has devised and performed for the department over the years.

Sigmon, and I teach spelling.' The room roared with laughter." Dr. McClanahan says, "That wonderful introduction told a lot about Dennis—modest, clever, wonderful sense of humor, brilliant sense of timing." Dr. Richard Vela adds, "This department will seem considerably different without Dennis. . . . I will very much miss his remarkably clever sense of humor. He can do things with words that are probably still illegal in some states. He added considerably to our department over the years."

Not only do his colleagues appreciate his sense of humor, but they also

as a new hire in August 1999, faculty members introduced themselves and stated their subject area. Dr. McClanahan recounts: "A number of [faculty] went on for a fair amount of time listing the various things they taught, researched, and in which they were otherwise involved.

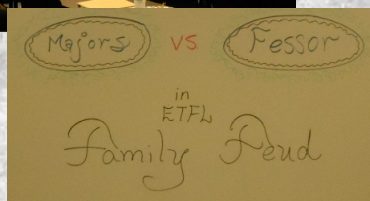
Dennis was the last one to introduce himself, and he said, 'I'm Dennis

Fun and Games



Throughout his time at UNCP, Dennis Sigmon has used his wit and creativity to engage students and colleagues. For example, he has adapted popular game shows like *Jeopardy!* and *Hollywood Squares* for learning in the classroom and entertainment at department events.

This tradition continued in Fall 2013, when Dennis surveyed his composition classes about various aspects of student life at UNCP and used their responses to produce an ETFL version of *Family Feud*, with students pitted against faculty, for the 16 October English majors meeting in the Dial AV Theatre. Some of the answers stumped both the majors and their professors, resulting—as Dennis surely intended—in much laughter, and a little enlightenment, for everyone in attendance.



acknowledge that Dr. Sigmon is an exceptional teacher and leader. Dr. Mark Canada, Dean of Arts and Sciences, writes: “Dennis is one of my favorite people on this campus. Like many in the department, I knew him as a conscientious, dedicated, and effective chair; however, the two memories that stand out for me have to do with Dennis the teacher. Shortly after I became chair, I sometimes would trot down to his office to ask a question or seek guidance. On more than one occasion, I simply could not get to him because he would spend hours upon hours working one on one with students in conferences. Talk about the personal touch! The second memory is of talking with Dennis about teaching. It seems that whenever we happen to be together—in a casual conversation at an event or in the lobby of the English office suite—we wind up talking about teaching. I can’t speak for him, but I really enjoy these conversations. They show an experienced, conscientious teacher reflecting on his craft.”

Dr. McClanahan says that since she assumed the position of department chair in 2009, Dr. Sigmon has been a “wonderful mentor and role model.” She points out: “The characteristic I try hardest to emulate is his sense of fairness. It can be very difficult to deal fairly with everyone and every situation regardless of personal feelings, but Dennis always seemed to manage to do so. I probably don’t always do as well as I would like in this regard, but having had Dennis’s example to follow has provided great guidance.”

Dr. Brown praises Dr. Sigmon as “one of the finest human beings” she has ever known. In particular, he is “one of two faculty members who made it possible for [her] to become one of this department’s first two women to receive tenure-track faculty appointments.” Dr. Brown also reports, “Dr. Sigmon carried into the chair position personal qualities that have made him an exceptionally collegial and dedicated colleague: commitment to our shared teaching mission, hard work, concern for faculty and students, unfailing generosity, and wisdom. His leadership style—democratic, analytical, organized, timely, and detail-oriented—created a new, more professional culture for this growing and complex department.”

Commending Dr. Sigmon for his professionalism as chair and commitment to students, Jan Gane writes, “I have always admired Dennis Sigmon as one who thinks things through thoroughly before speaking or acting. As department chair, he was a true individual, never influenced by any particular group within the department, but always fair and open to new ideas. He was also thorough, taking his responsibilities seriously, just as he expected each of us to approach our own responsibilities, both to students and to the department. I always knew that I could speak to him in confidence, and I respected his professionalism in his dealings with each of us. He is an outstanding educator of the highest order, dedicated to his students and to the department. Perhaps most of all, Dennis Sigmon expresses joy in his work, and that is an example for all of us.”

As for his plans for retirement, Dr. Sigmon says he will miss his drive

Fall English Majors Meeting

16 October 2013




Amid the fun and games...



... faculty members inform majors about course offerings for Spring 2014.



into work on the back roads of Robeson County as a time for reflection, particularly in the fall when the leaves on one of the maple trees on Santa Ana turn yellow. However, he looks forward to getting up in the morning and just thinking about what he is going to do that day and being as “unscheduled as possible.” Dr. Sigmon’s wife, Beth, is also retiring in the spring from Robeson Community College after teaching psychology for 37 years. So they both plan to travel more, particularly to visit their three children. Their son Hall graduated from NC State with a degree in engineering and currently works at Siemens in Raleigh. Their other son Cole received a master’s degree in engineering from the University of Colorado in Boulder and currently works at a wastewater treatment plant in Boulder. Their daughter, Ginna, will start the Physician’s Assistant Program at Wake Forest School of Medicine in June. In addition to traveling and spending more time with his family, Dr. Sigmon also hopes to pursue his interests in writing music and poetry. Although Dr. Sigmon will be greatly missed here at UNCP, we wish him all the best for this much deserved new chapter in his life. 

Good Wolfe Hunting: UNCP Graduate Students and Professor Visit Thomas Wolfe Archives

By MICHAEL J. BERNTSEN

Two English Education graduate students, Nami Montgomery and Michael Curtis Houck, joined Dr. Mark Canada on a research trip to the Houghton Library on Harvard University’s campus in October. After receiving support for their research trip from UNCP’s School of Graduate Studies and Research, they spent two days with the archival materials in the William B. Wisdom Collection of Thomas Wolfe.

Wolfe is certainly not the most influential American author, but taking Dr. Canada’s summer course on him has motivated Montgomery and Houck to participate in modern literary scholarship and strengthen their academic knowledge of creative writing. Extending the essay she composed for the Wolfe course, Montgomery investigated two people, Kenneth Raisbeck and Marjorie Fairbanks, who inspired significant characters in Wolfe’s second novel, *Of Time and the River*. Montgomery finds that the most fascinating aspect of his writing concerns the way in which he adapted personal relationships to inform his characters. Her goal as she searched through the archives was to discover how much of real life and how much creative licensing resides within the pages. “My research reveals the dramatic effect [Fairbanks and another traveling companion, Helen Harding] had on his life and work,” she stated.

Houck also examined the impact others had on Wolfe’s writing, tracing the influence of UNC drama professor Frederick Koch on his fiction. Wolfe’s first creative efforts were, in fact, connected to the theatre. Koch, who taught the first drama class for UNC and formed the renowned Carolina Playmakers,

Graduate Students Collaborate with Dr. Mark Canada on Thomas Wolfe Research



Michael Curtis Houck poses with a copy of Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward, Angel*.




Nami Montgomery and Mark Canada work on the book project *Thomas Wolfe Remembered*.

helped shape Wolfe's "homeward influence" within his writing. Houck found that before Wolfe took Koch's course, his works were homages to the classics rather than reflections on personal experience. Koch's focus on "folk-drama" guided Wolfe to pull from his own life. While Wolfe's drama was never successful outside the college setting, according to Houck, "his complex, dense style makes for a good read, especially his short stories."

Dr. Canada, Vice-President of the Thomas Wolfe Society, enjoyed the opportunity to invite graduate students to engage in the archival research process. As a Wolfe scholar, Dr. Canada has published an article, "Thomas Wolfe, 'Return,' and the *Asheville Citizen*," in the 2012 issue of *The Thomas Wolfe Review*, and collaborated with Dr. Joseph Flora, professor emeritus at UNC-Chapel Hill, on a dramatic performance called "Thomas Wolfe Comes Calling: A Visit with Vardis Fisher." The trip not only proved to be a successful academic pursuit, but also offered a wonderful teaching experience, seeing student-scholars take an active role in more traditional archival research. "Seeing their eyes light up when they found papers related to their ideas was wonderful," Dr. Canada said.

This excursion to Harvard's campus demonstrates how the study of literature offers an expansive, interdisciplinary education. The blend of history, autobiography, and writing increased the connections Montgomery and Houck formed to Wolfe's texts during the summer seminar. "Digging through all the manuscripts was fun," Montgomery admitted. "Getting to know him as a person and as a historical person is an aspect I enjoyed more than reading him." Houck, too, appreciated the "organic experience" of exploring archival materials, which is absent during searches through online databases.

Although all three literary detectives believe that Wolfe's legacy will remain outside of the American literary canon, Wolfe's works offer "a certain depth and insanity," as Houck put it, that place them in the ever-growing tapestry of modern American literature. As his editor, Edward Aswell, confessed, "I would not have believed it possible that anyone could write the way he did and achieve anything but hopeless confusion." Dr. Canada, Montgomery, and Houck found artistic value in Wolfe's writing process and historical presence, despite his undervalued status, that encouraged their own thinking and writing. Explaining their interest for Wolfe, Montgomery argues that "he's a little more creative than he's given credit and writes really good death scenes."

Currently, Montgomery is collaborating with Dr. Canada on a book to be called *Thomas Wolfe Remembered*, which will feature reminiscences by people who knew the novelist during their lifetimes. Houck is pursuing publication avenues for his work, as well. Reflecting on the trip, Montgomery said, "It was a great experience, and I'm very grateful to the university for helping us and the funding." Adding to her sentiment, Houck "hope[s] to make something that the university is proud of." 

2013-2014 University Theatre Productions

All University Theatre productions are held on the main stage of the Givens Performing Arts Center. Admission is free for UNCP students, faculty, and staff; \$3.00 for other students; and \$5.00 for general admission.

Dead Man's Cell Phone

By Sarah Ruhl

Directed by Chet Jordan
25-28 September 2013



Romeo and Juliet

By William Shakespeare

Directed by Holden Hansen
20-23 November 2013



Man of La Mancha

Book by Dale Wasserman

Lyrics by Joe Darion

Music by Mitch Leigh

Directed by Hal Davis
26-29 March 2014

Holden Hansen in *The Heretic*

By **THOMAS HEFFERNAN**

UNCP professor Holden Hansen was a featured actor in *The Heretic*, a new British black comedy that opened the 17th season of the Burning Coal Theater Company of Raleigh. *The Heretic* is a play with elements of social satire, romance crossed and uncrossed, Wildean wit, and British academic politics.

The situation in brief is this: Professor Kevin Maloney [Holden Hansen] does not believe global warming exists. He enjoins Dr. Diane Cassell, a University lecturer in his department, not to publish a paper about rising sea levels, fearing that would interfere with a grant he hopes to get. He does not agree with Diane's position about climate change. Dr. Cassell's life is complicated by her concern for her anorexic daughter Phoebe. A new student of Dr. Cassell's, Ben Shotter, is a climate-change activist; after he turns up, Phoebe's health gradually gets better. As to the older generation, in the past Prof. Maloney and Dr. Cassell were lovers. In the present, Prof. Maloney and his current partner are not getting along.

Plot construction and character contrast stress difference. The 'heresy' in the play is not about theology but about global warming. Prof. Maloney's position is dogmatic. Early on, employing his often inflated style, he says, "All heretics must die." He is in the seat of authority. Dr. Cassell is a heretic, according to the professor, for her claims about climate change.

In September I saw the final performance, which played to a close-to-full house. I was wondering how this British comedy would play to an American audience. When I asked Holden later what he thought of the play, he said, "I have mixed feelings about it as a work of art. I think it could go back into workshop and be re-written in places."

In part this may be because of the nature of the intended audience. Some lines that would get a laugh in London are less likely to connect with Americans. A line like "I'm middle class, so I play Scrabble," probably works better in England, where class consciousness is more overt than in the US. So I asked how a line having a British drawing room comedy tone (one of Holden's lines: "Ignorance has never stopped one from having an opinion") connected with the production's American audience. "The English persona—the Raleigh audience got it, enough of it, the themes of global warming, anorexia," Holden said. "Audience interest was strong; at talkbacks after performance, a lot of people stayed." A popular reference, as in the line "Al Gore buys a beach house," could not have been in the original script, I was thinking, but moved on. British and American, a miscellany of sensibilities abounds.

Holden felt comfortable with the play's direction: "Jerry [Jerome Davis, the play's director] is really cut from the same cloth as I. He understands the actor has to have some say. The original production was on a proscenium, but we were on an open stage, the audience all around three sides of it. Actors work

All in the Timing

Five Comedies by David Ives

Directed by Chet Jordan

17-20 April 2013

Sure Thing



Words, Words, Words



The Universal Language



The Philadelphia



Variations on the Death of Trotsky




out their movements on the stage. Jerry usually let us work out our movements on the stage.”

Returning to the play itself, Holden mentioned he felt that in Act II, there are “sections that seem to come from nowhere and not go anywhere. Like the relationship between my character and Diana. In Act I there is just one brief mention that she and I have a history. And later on, all she says about it is ‘being in love was not enough.’”


I asked Holden about his connection with the company and how being cast for the part took place. “I have a long history with Burning Coal,” he said, “as a company member and working with Jerry [Jerome Davis]. Networking and tryouts and callbacks, I wasn’t his first choice for Kevin Maloney. I usually am the second choice.”

“I liked the part,” he continued. “I rarely get to do comic roles. Usually I get darker roles.” Readers who saw Holden’s recent appearances in two A-list films will remember characters he played, neither of them comic: a heart attack victim given mouth-to-mouth resuscitation by a character played by Colin Firth in *Arthur Newman*, *Golf Pro*; and a rabid racist in *42*, the Jackie Robinson bio-pic. Holden saw his role as Prof. Maloney as “a chance to show I can do comedy. And the character is not unlike me.... sort of a smart-ass... fancy myself witty after a few drinks.”

As the play proceeds, at Christmas, having been kicked out by his present spouse, Kevin turns up at Diane’s and brings her a rose. He apologizes to her for his past and recent affronts. Diane’s anorexic daughter Phoebe and Ben Shotter, the student environmentalist, make up the rest of the party. These two were attracted to each other at first meeting. Ben has brought a song he’s written for Phoebe, and sings while accompanying on his guitar. Later the same day, Kevin picks up the guitar and sings part of a song to Diane: as Kevin, the actor Holden Hansen added singing, in good voice, to other credits. Closure occurs when, months later, as the play ends, Phoebe appears, no longer anorexic, bloomingly pregnant in her wedding gown.

“It was a good play to do, in line with Burning Coal’s interest in doing new plays, new material,” Holden said. In 2011 after its premiere at the Royal Court Theater in London, *The Heretic* received the *Evening Standard*’s “best new play of the year award.” Burning Coal’s is the first production in the US. 

University Theatre Productions

As promised in our last issue, scenes from the second Spring 2013 production, *All in the Timing*, appear on the left. The two Fall 2013 productions—*Dead Man’s Cell Phone*, directed by Chet Jordan, and *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Holden Hansen—appear on the next page. University Theatre will wrap up its 2013-14 season with *Man of La Mancha*, directed by Hal Davis, in March 2014 and an April dance performance choreographed by Natalie Smith. 

ETFL Theatre

Dead Man's Cell Phone by Sarah Ruhl ~ Directed by Chet Jordan ~ September 2013



Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare ~ Directed by Holden Hansen ~ November 2013

ET Foreign Languages

Chinese Moon Festival
19 September 2013



From Ten Suns to One: The Chinese Moon Festival

By **YUANYUAN LIN** AND **KATHERINE DENTON**

Long, long ago, there were ten suns in the sky. As such, they burned and destroyed all the plants on the earth. Many people suffered and died. One day, a hero whose name was Hou Yi used his bow and arrows to shoot down nine of the lethal suns. As a result, all people on the earth were saved.

Then, one day, the queen of heaven gave Hou Yi a bottle with an elixir that could make Hou Yi become an immortal. However, the benefits of this elixir would only allow a single person to achieve immortality. Hou Yi did want to become an immortal. Nonetheless, he wanted to remain with his beautiful wife,




Chang'e, for as long as possible. He, therefore, did not drink the elixir and instead requested that his wife Chang'e safeguard it for him.

As his heroic feat of destroying nine suns made Hou Yi increasingly more famous, countless men desired him to become their master. Unhappily, not all of Hou Yi's students possessed honor. Feng Meng, one such immoral student, desired only to steal Hou Yi's elixir for himself. One day, Hou Yi went hunting with his students, but Feng Meng feigned illness in order to remain behind. After assuring himself that Hou Yi was no longer present, he attempted to forcibly take the elixir from Chang'e. Chang'e knew she could not defend herself against Feng Meng, so, in desperation, she drank the elixir. Upon obtaining immortality through the elixir's magic, she began to fly higher and higher. She did not stop her ascension until she reached the moon.

From that day forward, the Chinese people often pray to Chang'e for fortune and safety. It has since become a tradition to provide offerings to Chang'e during the Mid-Autumn Festival. It is a commonly held belief that a full moon is a symbol of peace, prosperity, and family reunion. On the night of this festival, the moon is supposed to be at its brightest and fullest, which is why this celebration is also known as the "Moon Festival."

Traditionally, this festival is celebrated on the fifteenth day of the eighth lunar month, which is in September or October. This semester, on 19 September, UNCP students, faculty, and staff celebrated the Mid-Autumn Festival with Chinese instructor Ms. Yuanyuan Lin. During this event, attendees not only learned about the festival's legendary past, but also were able to participate in a traditional fan dance and plate spinning. Participants were also instructed in Chinese calligraphy and how to properly use chopsticks.

Through the support of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the involvement of Ms. Lin and students from her Elementary I and II Chinese classes, the campus community was able to participate in and experience the second most important festival (after the Spring Festival) to Chinese people. 

ET Foreign Languages

An International Film Series

Every semester, all students, faculty, and staff are welcome to attend An International Film Series hosted by the Foreign Languages faculty. Begun anew in Spring 2013, all foreign languages faculty members take turns presenting and hosting a thematically distinct series of films. The campus community has enjoyed and experienced a diversity of cultures from showings that included nationalities and languages such as Mongolian, Italian, Chinese and Spanish.

Fall 2013 Films

19 September—*El Lute*

Presented by Enrique Porrúa

26 September—*14 Kilómetros*

Presented by Manuel Modesto

17 October—*Not One Less*

Presented by Yuanyuan Lin

29 October—*El mal ajena*

Presented by Katherine Denton

7 November—*Benvenuti al Sud*

Presented by Cecilia Lara

19 November—*Who Killed the White Lama?*

Presented by Raquel Alfaro

Films are shown at 6:00 PM in the Dial AV Theatre. For details about the Spring 2014 films schedule, please visit the Foreign Languages website.

Why Spanish?

By KATHERINE DENTON

Studying a foreign language creates a window of opportunities. In order to be competitive in today's job market, graduates need to be capable of functioning at high levels of linguistic and cultural proficiency. With the turn of the century, a significant focus has been placed on the ability to manage communication and to transfer knowledge across languages and cultures. Therefore, in order to be culturally competent, it is essential to form an understanding of another language.

Today, Spanish is the world's third most spoken language and ranks second in terms of native speakers. In the United States, more than 38 million residents speak Spanish at home. Internationally, it is the native language of approximately 460 million people in 21 countries. Spanish is also widely spoken in more countries where it is not the official language. In fact, over 515 million people across the world can speak Spanish!

The knowledge of a foreign language expands a student's career options and complements a wide range of undergraduate majors, including Business, Criminal Justice, American Indian Studies, Economics, Communications, Political Science, Sociology, and Nursing. Consider this: A graduate who majored in both Spanish and Nursing can more effectively communicate with the growing Hispanic population seeking health care.

The Hispanic population in the US has grown by over 60% in just the past decade. Career opportunities for students with Spanish language skills exist in almost every field, including education, government, business, communications, and social services/scientific fields.

Study Abroad: Spring Break 2014 in Madrid

By ENRIQUE PORRÚA

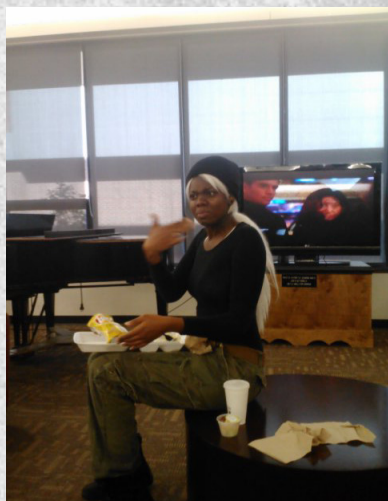
In the Spring of 2014, a group of around 20 students, led by two or three Spanish faculty members, will visit Madrid, Spain, over Spring Break. This program is intended for students with intermediate to advanced skills in Spanish language, but has no restrictions based on Spanish language skills. The main purpose is cultural immersion and interaction with the environment—which may also help improve language skills.

The program offers 3 credit hours to students, who must register for SPN 3510 Study Abroad, an elective for Spanish majors and minors. To receive credit for SPN 3510, students must attend all activities, be proactive in interacting with the environment (i.e., try to speak Spanish as needed), and write a journal detailing their daily experiences and reflections. Students in the Spanish program as majors or minors must write their journal in Spanish; others can do it in English.

ET Foreign Languages

La voz del español

Spanish students meet in the UC Lounge for informal conversations and other activities that allow them to socialize and have fun while reinforcing what they have learned in the classroom.




Faith McLean



Sylvia Henriquez and Shekiniah Martin

The group will meet at RDU the afternoon of 28 February and fly together with the faculty leaders to Madrid. Arriving the following morning, students will be guided to the hotel using available public transportation. The first day in town will be “free” in the sense that there are no activities scheduled for this day, but the group will remain together to explore the surroundings of the hotel and the neighborhood. Starting Sunday, 2 March, the group will meet in the hotel lobby at 9:00 AM to start scheduled tours around the city. The group will be using the “Madrid Card,” which includes five days worth of unlimited public transportation within the city of Madrid and VIP entrance to more than 50 museums and historical places. We intend to visit as many of those as time allows, including the Prado museum, Reina Sofia, National Museum of Archaeology, Museum of Natural Sciences, Maritime Museum, Royal Palace, and Museum of Romanticism.


Most other days will follow the same schedule, with the evenings off for students to explore on their own. One day will be set aside for travel by high speed (AVE) train to Segovia, a nearby city full of historical landmarks and places to visit, including the Roman aqueduct, cathedral, and Real Alcazar. 

La voz del español

By SHAYLA WILLIAMS

La voz del Español is a student-run organization on campus at UNCP, run by Alma Vela and myself, Shayla Williams. Our goal as a club is to get our fellow students excited about learning Spanish, while also providing a bit of supplemental instruction. We meet once a week on Mondays, and we spend the majority of the meeting time working on relevant and fun activities that we have planned in advance. Whenever necessary, we also help students with assignments and papers that they have received from their professors.

La voz is a wonderful organization for students because we help students to practice their reading, writing, and speaking skills in Spanish in a relaxed, friendly environment. We want participants to practice Spanish as much as possible, so we also try to hold relaxed conversations about current topics such as our favorite television shows and events on campus. Whenever possible, we try to encourage participants to use the vocabulary they learn in class and apply it to our conversations in our meetings. To ensure that *La voz* remains interesting for students, we try to keep our activities relevant, without it seeming like work. We recently had a small potluck “fiesta” in order to facilitate conversation about our favorite foods, restaurants, etc. We had a wonderful time eating and even managed to attract the interest of students of other disciplines!

Our ultimate goal as a club is to put on a puppet show for the community. We hope to be able to visit the local library and perform a show for children while simultaneously demonstrating our skills in Spanish. 

Retirement Reception for Emma Evans 6 November 2013



Arrivals and Departures

By SARA OSWALD

Foreign Languages returned to us in Fall 2013 after five years as a separate department. Two new Spanish faculty members, **RAQUEL ALFARO** and **MANUEL MODESTO**, arrived in the fall, joining **KATIE DENTON**, **ENRIQUE PORRÚA**, and **CECILIA LARA**, who became Coordinator of Spanish and Spanish Licensure. A new Chinese instructor, **YUANYUAN LIN**, joined the part-time Foreign Languages faculty, which also includes **MARION THOMPSON** (French) and **LUC NERWINSKI** (Latin).

Our Theatre faculty gained a new member in the fall with the arrival of **HOLLY PAYNE**, who will specialize in costume design.

In November, we said farewell to **EMMA EVANS**, who retired after more than twenty years of service to our department. “Ms. Emma” joined us in 1989 to provide administrative support for the offices of Advisement and Retention and Freshman Composition; both offices were then directed by Richard Vela, with whom Emma worked for many years. When the department expanded to the second floor of the Dial Building, Emma moved upstairs to provide support for Composition and Foreign Languages.

At a retirement reception on 6 November, Emma’s contributions were acknowledged with gifts from the department, presented by Kay McClanahan; a moving and often humorous speech by Richard Vela; and a performance by Dennis Sigmon of his “Butterbean Baby” song, with new lyrics written especially for Emma. The reception was attended by department faculty and staff, many others from the University community, and several of Emma’s children, grandchildren, and other family members. We will miss Emma’s smiling face, and we wish her well in her retirement.

Sadly, we also said farewell to **CAROLYN PRICE**, whose untimely death occurred over Thanksgiving Break; Carolyn is remembered on page 17. 

Faculty Activities

MONIKA BROWN served as evaluator for senior project presentations at Massey Hill High School in Fayetteville in May 2013, invited by a graduate of UNCP’s MA in English Education. In spring 2013, she received a HOPES grant for Online Course Redesign. For the grant, she attended an Online Course development workshop conducted by Dr. Beth Hewett, 8-9 May, and revised her ENG 2060 online literature course for the fall semester. The course will be reviewed with the Quality Matters Rubric. In Fall 2013, Soomo Publishing from Asheville invited Dr. Brown (based on her syllabi posted online) to become one of three professional consultants for the development, in Fall 2013, of two new online World Literature courses. At UNC Pembroke, the 2013 issue of *ReVisions* includes an essay by English major Matt Cowper about Goethe’s *Mephis-*

ETFL Fall Potluck Social 20 October 2013



topheles, written for World Literature 2060. This fall, Dr. Brown and her husband, History Department Chair Dr. Robert Brown, invited several students to join them for operas, NC Symphony, and Evensong concerts in Southern Pines. They also took three exchange students from Germany and Italy on tours of Southern Pines, Pinehurst, the Duke campus, Chapel Hill and UNC, and the NC Art Museum. Dr. Brown and her daughter Sarah, a journalism major at UNC, sang the Faure *Requiem* with the Duke Chapel Choir at a choir reunion. For Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Southern Pines, Dr. Brown wrote an explication of “Teach Me My God and King” by poet George Herbert and its musical setting by composer David Halls. She sings in the Emmanuel Choir, which provides music both for the Sunday services and for monthly concerts of traditional Anglican Choral Evensong. Dr. Brown continues to coordinate church volunteers for Moore County’s Family Promise program for temporarily homeless women and children.

MARK CANADA spent part of his summer with Thomas Wolfe—or, at least, his writing and legacy. In May, Dr. Canada, whose article “Thomas Wolfe, ‘Return,’ and the *Asheville Citizen*” just appeared in the most recent issue of The Thomas Wolfe Review, collaborated with Dr. Joseph Flora, professor emeritus at UNC-Chapel Hill, on a dramatic performance called “Thomas Wolfe Comes Calling: A Visit with Vardis Fisher” at the annual meeting of the Thomas Wolfe Society in Boise, Idaho. Dr. Canada also is collaborating with UNCP graduate student Nami Montgomery on a book called *Thomas Wolfe Remembered*, which will feature reminiscences of the North Carolina novelist by relatives, colleagues, and other acquaintances. In July, Dr. Canada taught a graduate class that focused on Wolfe and featured field trips to the author’s hometown of Asheville, NC, and his alma mater, UNC-Chapel Hill. As the new vice president of the Thomas Wolfe Society, Dr. Canada is helping to plan the society’s next meeting, scheduled to take place in May 2014 in Chapel Hill. He hopes that some of the students in his Wolfe class will present work they began in the class at the conference. Dr. Canada’s other recent projects include “Rebecca Harding Davis’s Human Stories of the Civil War,” published in the fall 2013 issue of *Southern Cultures*, and “The Syllabus: A Place to Engage Students’ Egos,” which appeared in a fall 2013 issue of *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*.

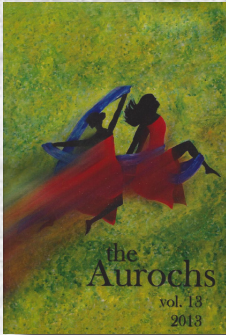
YOUNGSUK CHAE’s article “Disidentification with the Homogenizing and Commodifying Narratives of Ethnicity in Han Ong’s *Fixer Chao*” was included in *Constructing the Literary Self: Race and Gender in Twentieth-Century Literature*, edited by Patsy Daniels and published by Cambridge Scholars, UK, 2013.

HOLDEN HANSEN appeared as Professor Kevin Maloney in Richard Bean’s comedy *The Heretic* at Burning Coal Theatre Company in Raleigh in September 2013. In November, he directed our University Theatre production of *Romeo and Juliet*.

Student Publication Awards

2013 *Aurochs*

Mary Hunter, Editor-in-Chief
Karen Helgeson, Faculty Advisor



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English Education Internship Award

Established in Fall 2012 to honor the retirement of Dr. Virginia P. Jones, this award provides scholarship assistance to senior English Education majors during their internship semester.

Funds for this year's awards were donated by colleagues and friends to honor **Dr. Dennis Sigmon** for his past service as Coordinator of Undergraduate English Education and his ongoing commitment to preparing our majors for careers in teaching. Four students chosen by the English Education Committee will receive awards for the Spring 2014 semester:

Arielle Beal
Paulette DeGrood
Karen Henderson
Kelly Yarn

TOM HEFFERNAN served as Resident Writer during a week-long Art Workshop held at Aery Knoll Farm in Augusta County, Virginia, in June 2013. In November he read poems, his own work and others', during an evening of presentations in Laurinburg, and also in November, read his own and others' poems at Pease Auditorium in Charlotte. His work appears in the current issue of *Ribbons: The Journal of the Tanka Society of America*.

EUN HEE JEON and Y. Butler are scheduled to present "The Relationship between Word Association Behavior and Storytelling Performance in Korean and English among Korean Kindergarten Children" at AAAL in Portland, OR, in March 2014. Dr. Jeon's article "Meta-Analytic Structural Equation Modeling," co-authored with L. Plonsky, will appear in a special volume of *English Teaching and Learning*.

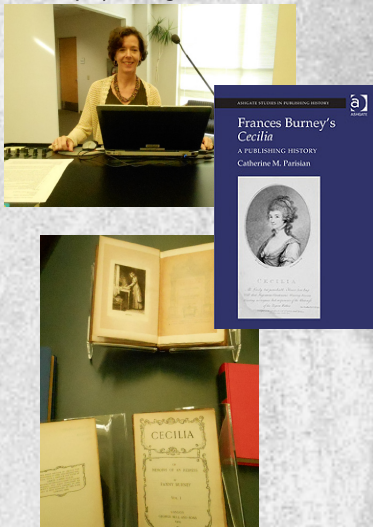
WALT LEWALLEN gave a paper, "Framing Mailer's Texts for College Students," at the Norman Mailer Society Conference in October 2013 in Sarasota, FL.

CYNTHIA MIECZNIKOWSKI, along with Purnell Swett High School English teachers Kelly House Fox and Alicia Mansfield, presented "Reading Into the Future: How Cross-Institutional Teacher-Partnerships Are Beating the Odds in the Digital Age—and Why It Matters," at the Conference on English Leadership in Boston, 24-26 November. Dr. Miecznikowski reported on the short history of her partnership with Purnell Swett and summarized classroom research conducted by UNCP School of Education reading specialists at Prospect Elementary School this year. Drs. Heather Higgins Lynn, Laura Staal, and Angela Rogers, who designed and conducted the project, were unable to attend the conference. However, Dr. Olivia Oxendine, also from UNCP's School of Education, contributed a brief history of literacy education in Robeson County to the group's presentation. In August, Dr. Miecznikowski, along with Drs. Emily Long and Olivia Oxendine, was awarded one of seven Supporting Alignment for Student Success (SASS) Mini-Grants offered by NC Ready for Success—a cross-sector collaboration between the NC Community College System, the University of North Carolina, the NC Department of Public Instruction, and the NC Independent and Private Colleges and Universities. The grant supports their partnership with Bladen County Public Schools and Community College teachers and administrators. Based on, in the words of the grant, a "shared understanding of NC's new career and college readiness standards," the goal of the grant-funded project is to create an online instrument that can inform and guide teachers as they consider and seek to integrate NC DPI resources, Common Core State Standards, and best practices for teaching English and English Education to meet their instructional goals.

SARA OSWALD served as a judge for the annual NC College Media Competition in December 2013.

UNCP Friends of the Library Fall Faculty Showcase 30 October 2013

Catherine Parisian discusses her most recent book, *Frances Burney's Cecilia: A Publishing History*, at the library's Fall Faculty Showcase. Pages from early editions of Burney's novel were on display during the event.



Melissa Schaub discusses her book, *Middlebrow Feminism in Classic British Detective Fiction*, and autographs a copy after the event.



CATHERINE PARISIAN presented “Frances Burney as Wonder Woman: From Chapbooks to Comic Books” on 22 July 2013 to the Burney Society of the UK at Cambridge University. During the fall semester, she also visited the East Central Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies and the Samuel Johnson Society of West in her role as Affiliates Society Coordinator for the American Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies.

HOLLY PAYNE, who joined our Theatre faculty in Fall 2013, served as Costume Designer in Summer 2013 for the Arkansas Shakespeare Festival production of *Oliver!* in Conway, AR, and for the American Players Theatre production of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* in Spring Green, WI; she was also Associate Costume Designer for the American Players Theatre production of *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. In Fall 2013, Ms. Payne was Costume Designer for the Renaissance Theatreworks production of *The Belle of Amherst* and the Milwaukee Repertory Theater production of *End of the Rainbow*, both in Milwaukee, WI, and for the Riverside Theatre production of *I Love a Piano* in Vero Beach, FL.

MELISSA SCHAUB published “Middlebrow Feminism and the Politics of Sentiment: From *The Moonstone* to Dorothy L. Sayers” in the Summer 2013 issue of *Modern Language Studies*.

ROBIN SNEAD defended her dissertation, titled *Tracing Activity: The Multimodal Composing Processes of First-Year Writing Students*, in June 2013 and received her Ph.D. from NC State University. Dr. Susan Miller-Cochran was her dissertation chair; Drs. Chris Anson, Carolyn Miller, and Deanna Dannels were her committee members. On Friday, 4 October 2013, Dr. Snead presented “De-Centering’ Instruction: Active Engagement Through the Flipped Model” at the annual conference of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.


RICHARD VELA, who was on Directed Academic Leave of Absence for Spring 2013 to study film violence focusing on the figure of the hit man, recently presented three conference papers: “Blood will have blood’: Shakespeare, Murder, and Film,” for The Medieval-Renaissance Conference at the University of Virginia’s College at Wise, 19-21 September 2013; “The Sci-Fi Hit Man Film: Motive and Method in *Looper*,” for the Popular Culture of the South Conference at Savannah, GA, 3-5 October 2013; and “Marked Men: Gangs, Gangsters, and Armies in Recontextualized Shakespeare,” for the Literature/Film Association Conference at The University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, 10-12 October 2013. Currently, as Chair for the Shakespeare on Film and Television area of the Popular Culture Association, he is organizing panels for the national conference in Chicago, IL, 16-19 April 2014. 



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News items and announcements for future issues should be submitted in Microsoft Word or Rich Text Format. Photos should be submitted as JPEG or TIFF files. Send news and photos to

catherine.parisian@uncp.edu

This and previous issues of *The Beacon* are available in PDF format on the department's website:

www.uncp.edu/etfl/news/

In Memoriam

Carolyn Thames Price, our department secretary for the past 13 years, died unexpectedly of a heart attack over Thanksgiving Break. She is survived by her daughter, Jamie Lyndsey; her son, Kevin Price; her brother, Allen Bracey; her stepfather, Alfred Bracey; and five grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Many people from the department and other university offices joined Carolyn's family and friends at her memorial service on 6 December in Dillon, SC.

We will remember Carolyn for her love of children, which extended from her own grandchildren to the sons and daughters of our faculty, who always received special treatment from her when they visited campus. We will remember her for her other passions, which included reading, gardening, and lighthouses. We will remember her for the many administrative services and acts of kindness, large and small, that she performed for us over the years. And we will remember Carolyn for her unstinting loyalty and dedication to our department and the people in it. She will be missed. 