

The Beacon

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The Newsletter of the Department of English and Theatre at UNC Pembroke

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The University of North Carolina
at Pembroke

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Engaged in Learning

By JIM HELGESON


As he concluded his University Address this past August, Chancellor Carter encouraged UNCP departments to seriously consider how they might integrate engaged learning into the curricula of their majors. The Chancellor's endorsement of engaged learning reflects the increasingly widespread conviction that, as he put it, "applying knowledge to real life issues and problems motivates students and improves learning." Among several types of educational activity that might qualify as engaged learning, perhaps the best known and most prevalent is one with which the English and Theatre Department has already had considerable experience and success: service-learning. Of the twelve service-learning courses offered at UNCP during the Fall 2011 term, six were taught by E&T faculty; three of the five 2011-2012 Faculty Fellows in Service-Learning are from E&T, and two of our department members together received one of the five UNCP Awards for Engaged Learning granted this past fall. Clearly, then, the Department of English and Theatre can be expected to play a prominent role in UNCP's push to expand and improve its service-learning offerings.

Especially well acquainted with engaged learning and its possible applications to college English courses is Dr. Scott Hicks, whose service-learning-based ENG 3100—The Harlem Renaissance is fast becoming an undergraduate favorite. Named for a period of remarkable artistic,

especially literary, productivity in New York City's Harlem district in the 1920s and 30s, Harlem Renaissance courses have become curriculum staples in universities across the country. Typically, such courses feature readings that not only describe and protest the inequities and brutalities facing African Americans of this era but also celebrate their hard-earned new sense of identity and creative power. Accustomed to teaching his "Renaissance" courses roughly along these lines, Scott's insight was to see, first, that audiences—especially young audiences—of all races and backgrounds could well relate to the content of such a course; second, that there were any number of potential audiences in the communities surrounding UNCP; and, finally, that his own students could learn and grow through sharing with such audiences what they learned in ENG 3100. And so, not without some trepidation, he added a service-learning component to the course. The results? As he noted when asked in a recent interview to compare his students' performance before and after service-learning, "I could never go back."

Last spring term's Harlem Renaissance course proved an especially good example of what engaged learning can add to an academic experience. In addition to completing all the usual sorts of course requirements, each of Scott's students joined one of four teams that visited with, mentored, and learned from members of four area community organizations: the Methodist Home for Children, the Pembroke Housing Authority's after-school program, the Wesley Pines Retirement Home, and the Robeson County Guardian

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ad Litem Program. (Guardian ad Litem programs are comprised of volunteers responsible for protecting and representing children involved in court proceedings.) With each team—in collaboration with members of its respective community group—being responsible for designing its own activities and agendas, Scott’s students facilitated workshops in which Harlem Renaissance and other literary works were read and discussed; prompted the children to write, draw, or paint their impressions of these discussions; and, in general, encouraged participants to reflect on how the ideas they were exploring related to their own lives, their problems, and their aspirations.

One might think the addition of these features would considerably increase the amount of time and effort instructors must spend on class preparation, but Scott reports that incorporating the service-learning dimension into his course did not significantly change his workload—once the initial organization and logistical arrangements had been established, that is. These latter duties, he is quick to acknowledge, would scarcely be doable “without Christie.” “Christie” is Christie Poteet, Director of Service-Learning, Associate Director for Community Service and, it happens, part-time Lecturer in English and Theatre. Herself a regular participant in engaged-learning programs while an undergraduate at service-oriented Berea College, Christie brings to her position a wealth of passion and commitment, as well as experience. When instructors propose adding service-related components to a course, she begins by reviewing that course’s syllabus, especially its stated goals and objectives. Drawing upon her voluminous acquaintance with

the nature and needs of our area’s multitude of community organizations, she identifies the organization(s) most likely to benefit from the services being offered and then secures the pending partnership by attending to the myriad organizational and logistical details alluded to above.

Another English and Theatre faculty member who has been testing the service-learning waters recently is Dr. Michele Fazio. Since many of the readings assigned in her ENG 2020—Contemporary Literature course dealt with a variety of problems confronting contemporary women, she and her students opted for a service project that would address what is arguably the worst of these problems. In conjunction with the Rape Crisis Center of Robeson County, they created “In Their Own Voices,” a multi-media project designed to promote awareness of sexual violence on campus. In the project’s early stages, student responsibilities consisted primarily of interviewing victims of sexual violence and adapting their stories to the multi-media format. Class members then presented and led discussions of “In Their Own Voices” at events sponsored by such organizations as the Pembroke University Research and Creativity Center (PURC) and the Office for Community and Civic Engagement.

In addition to enhancing their understanding of course content and honing their sense of civic responsibility, as Michele pointed out in a recent faculty colloquium sponsored by the Student Engagement Committee, students involved in service-oriented projects frequently acquire valuable skills not normally associated with academic endeavors. She noted that her own students, for example, appreciably improved their interviewing

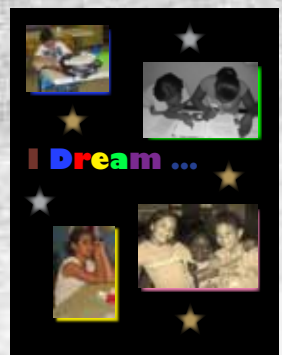
ENG 3100 Publications April 2011



Crisis! was produced by the ENG 3100 students who worked with residents of Wesley Pines Retirement Home.



DARE includes writing and art by children in the Guardian ad Litem program.



I Dream includes writing and art by children in the Pembroke Housing Authority after-school program.

skills as well as their ability to work in common cause with others. No small accomplishment. In short, Michele has become, like Scott, an enthusiastic advocate of engaged learning. “I couldn’t believe it,” she exclaimed to that same colloquium as she described her students’ habit of staying long after their Monday night classes were supposed to have ended, long enough on some occasions that she simply had to leave them to their deliberations and head home while there was still time enough to get a decent night’s sleep.

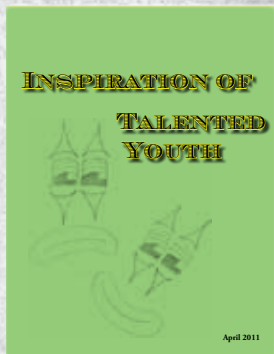
In addition to teaching service-oriented classes, Scott and Michele further contribute to engaged learning at UNCP in their capacities as Faculty Fellows in Service-Learning. A Faculty Fellow’s chief responsibility, as described on the Service-Learning website, is to “help other faculty integrate service-learning into their classes.” Yet another department member serving in this capacity is Dr. Anita Guynn, who also directs E&T’s Composition Program. While service-learning might be an unlikely fit for certain literature courses, composition courses—because they can be structured around so many different topics and can support so many types of reading and other assignments—lend themselves quite well to the approach. To date, Anita has experimented with two such classes, one an advanced composition course and the other the program’s most basic offering, ENG 0104. As she sees it, the addition of service-related activities can be especially improving where lower-level composition courses are concerned. Because these courses are required rather than elective, some students find it difficult to consistently muster the enthusiasm needed to perform well in them. Including service projects in such courses—and,

in that process, also giving students real responsibility for performing “real-world” work—can go a long way toward solving the motivational problem, says Anita. She is also a firm believer in another service-learning staple, reflection. Students who have trouble reviewing and assimilating what they have studied, she notes, tend to find this task easier when that material can be viewed using perspectives crafted in the real world experiences entailed in their service projects.

As might be expected with such ambitious undertakings, the desired university-course/community-project fit occasionally fails to materialize, but there are lessons to be learned from that experience as well. Although, for a variety of reasons beyond their control, the workshops led by the Harlem Renaissance class’s Retirement Home team didn’t live up to their expectations, team members reported having profited greatly from and being much moved by their association with retirees who “invited us into their world.”

The three teams working with children’s groups were enormously successful. One sign of that success was their performance on exams and other traditional methods of assessing course content mastery. As noted earlier, Scott’s judgment was that the majority of these students clearly outperformed students in classes having similar content but lacking that service dimension. His experience, it should be noted, is consistent with survey results described, for example, on the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse website, results attesting to the “positive impact of service-learning on academic learning.” And, of course, there were many other less objectively verifiable but equally,

ENG 3100 Publications April 2011 (cont.)



Inspiration of Talented Youth includes writing and art by children from the Methodist Home for Children.

Students and Community Partners Celebrate Publications



In April 2011, Scott Hicks and his ENG 3100 students got together with some of their community partners and others to celebrate the publication of their magazines. Pictured above, ENG 3100 students Sarah Heard, Desiree Manello, Keon Pacheco, and Stephanie Tillman pose with some of the children from the Methodist Home for Children who participated in their Harlem Renaissance workshop.

if not even more, compelling signs of success.

One of the best-known poems to emerge from the Harlem Renaissance, Langston Hughes's "Theme for English B," struck an especially resonant chord with the (mostly) twelve- to fourteen-year-olds hearing and discussing it for the first time in those workshops last spring. As many of you will already know, the premise of that poem is that its speaker is responding to a college English teacher's interesting but oddly challenging homework assignment:

*Go home and write
a page tonight.
And let that page come out of you—
Then, it will be true.*

The speaker imagines himself answering, telling his instructor he is yet a part of me, as I am a part of you. That's American.

.....
As I learn from you
I guess you learn from me—

Few passages could better embody the spirit or realize the intent of engaged-learning partnerships; it would seem, in fact, to be what ENG 3100 in particular is all about—its students not only reinforcing their grasp of the course's "book knowledge" by sharing it with their workshop partners but also expanding on that knowledge by witnessing the course's themes and issues being brought to life in what these same children said and did. As their final project, each workshop group conceived and (with the help of several university friends) produced its own twelve-page, 8½-by-11 booklet containing poems, prose, and artwork by the children; pictures of them as well as their student mentors; and many, many "thank yous." Workshop members received copies for distribution among

family members. Publication funding was provided by the Teaching and Learning Center and the Office of Academic Affairs. E&T's Sara Oswald provided design, editing, and pre-publication assistance, while UNCP Print Services staffer Tarassa McGirt and Printing Supervisor Glenda Kiser not only handled the printing but also gave several children a tour of their facilities.

Unfortunately, several workshop children have already seen more than their fair share of life's darker side; it came as no surprise, then, that—along with the many expressions of happiness and hope—a few shadows found their way into these labors of love. Take, for example, the following excerpt from one young girl's contribution to the Guardian ad Litem booklet:

Life's a game,
play it well.
Time is ticking
and no one can tell
when your number
is up. So live life
Well.

The child's interest in this simple jingle, apparently transcribed from a source whose message she found particularly relevant to her own experience, would seem to testify to wary and wise-beyond-her-years misgivings, even fears. (The only African American in that workshop, her circumstances were in most respects much like those of its other members.) Her story doesn't end there, however, for the poem was only part of a larger prose piece occupying almost an entire page, all lightly penciled within an ornate, framing rectangle she had meticulously built out of colored dots. Its title? "Resolve – to bring positive change." She did. "I've always

E&T Fall Social 22 October 2011



E&T faculty members and families gathered at the Laurinburg home of Kay McClanahan for the department's annual fall potluck.




Mark Canada, Kay McClanahan, and Brigitte Knight



Therese Rizzo, Polina Chemisanova, and Tamika Carey



Melissa Schaub and Chet Jordan

wanted to be a singer,” she began, “and to write poems.” Fulfilling the promise of her title, the aspiring author’s prose transformed the poem’s problematical message, trumped it by simply making it part of her song and thus herself. One can only imagine how much she learned from, and was thrilled by, her introduction to a new world of art, music, poetry, and ideas—or how much better her student mentors must have understood the Harlem Renaissance because of her. 

“Walkabout” in Albuquerque

By **TEAGAN DECKER & SCOTT HICKS**

In July 2011, Teagan Decker, MJ Braun, and Scott Hicks from the English and Theatre Department and Tulla Lightfoot from the Art Department, attended a National Collegiate Honors Council teaching institute in Albuquerque, NM. Our travel was funded by UNCP’s Esther G. Maynor Honors College. We prepared for the experience by reading a large packet of material, which included books and articles on the art, architecture, geography, politics, and history of the region. Several literary works were also included, such as Simon Ortiz’s poetry collection *Out There Somewhere*. On our journey to Albuquerque, the four of us travelled together, reading these materials and looking forward to meeting our fellow attendees and the four facilitators of the institute, one of whom was our colleague Jesse Peters.

At the institute, attendees were introduced to the experiential education methodology City as Text. In the spirit of experiential education, we were asked to take on the role of students and experience the teaching model for ourselves. For the first two days we were sent on “walkabout” assignments

to neighborhoods in Albuquerque and were asked to “read” the city by observing our surroundings, interacting with people, eating local foods, and generally immersing ourselves in Albuquerque. We had the option on the third day either to take the train to Santa Fe or drive to the Acoma Pueblo in order to enrich our understandings of and questions about the region. We returned from these excursions each afternoon to meet with the larger group and the facilitators, and then we were given writing assignments that were due the following morning. On the fourth and final day all attendees and facilitators met at the University of New Mexico’s Honors Center to discuss how we would apply the pedagogy to our programs and courses.

The institute provided us plenty to work with as we planned our courses for the fall semester. MJ Braun and Teagan Decker applied the experiential learning methods to our co-taught honors freshman seminar course, where we asked students to “walkabout” the university and report their findings to the class. Students found this exercise valuable and were able to speak to students, faculty, and staff on campus whom they wouldn’t approach ordinarily. We had somewhat mixed results, however, when we sent students on a community walkabout in Pembroke. We found that some of their reactions reinscribed student prejudices about the community. This was troublesome but certainly allowed for some important conversation in the classroom. On the positive side, one group of students reported on the NC Indian Culture Center Park, where the *Strike at the Wind* Amphitheatre is located. This park is in a state of disrepair, but the students described it with great sensitivity and care, ending their presentation with a report on local efforts to restore this important community asset. All in all, we found that City as Text is a versatile


Fun and Games at the English Majors Meeting 19 October 2011



At the Fall 2011 Majors Meeting, English majors and faculty members participated in some friendly competitions (above) organized by Dennis Sigmon. They also enjoyed refreshments, shared some laughs, and—BTW—received information on many of the department's course offerings for the Spring 2012 semester.



and productive model for teaching freshman seminar courses.

Scott Hicks applied the pedagogy to his English 1050 class, where students, like those in MJ Braun and Teagan Decker's FRS classes, undertook their walkabouts on campus. Assigned to groups of three or four, students visited the Bob Caton Fieldhouse, water feature and amphitheatre, Career Center, Multicultural Center, UC Lounge, Native American Resource Center, University Writing Center, Starbucks, bookstore, McDonalds, and Pembroke Place community center. They reported on their observations, sharing their essays with their peers. After synthesizing the places they visited and crafting a theory essay that sought to abstract deeper meanings from their experiences, students spent a week in Livermore Library and identified scholarly readings that complicated their preconceptions and initial observations. Since their walkabouts, then, students have begun exploring the problems of college athletics, the moral responsibilities of corporate America, the problems of video games, theories of composition pedagogy—even the evolutionary psychology of flowers and philosophies of happiness. Like MJ Braun and Teagan Decker, Scott Hicks found City as Text to be a dynamic model for prompting and energizing students' engagement in their own learning—and along the way, he learned things about campus he never knew. 

Writing as Therapy

Late this past September, Cynthia Miecznikowski found herself delivering a paper, "(W)Righting the Past: Hospice Survivors, Composing Stories and Lives," at the University of Silesia's Institute of English Cultures and Literature in Ustron, Poland. Although she hadn't recognized it as such at

the time, Cyndi's introduction to therapeutic writing began at the moment twenty years earlier when she learned her mother was dying of cancer. Between that September day and her mother's death just three months later, on Christmas Eve, Cyndi "began writing daily in a simple, spiral-bound notebook, recording our conversations . . ." As she explained in the introduction to her Ustron presentation, "I was writing to save my mother's life—not literally, of course, but for myself in the future I would live without her." Less than a year later, similar notebook entries would help her cope with the even more sudden illness and death of her father.

In time, with ever-increasing commitments to marriage, motherhood, and career leaving less and less opportunity for journal writing, Cyndi reluctantly packed the notebooks away. In the fall of 2006, however, a letter from an old friend not only helped revive her interest in therapeutic writing but literally ushered in a whole new phase of her life. The letter was accompanied by a newspaper clipping describing the efforts of several young cancer survivors to "write their way to hope." "The article," Cyndi recalls, "got me thinking about my journal, my mother's illness, and how I might turn my experience into something that could honor my mother and help others." She contacted a grief counselor at First Health Hospice and Palliative Care in Pinehurst, suggesting the establishment there of weekly writing sessions and volunteering to facilitate them. Enthusiastic and immensely supportive, the counselor made arrangements for times and places and gathered a small group of area women willing to give the experiment a try.

After sharing with her Ustron audience a few context-creating details like those recounted above, Cyndi proceeded to review findings gleaned from the wealth of scholarly

Fall 2011 E&T Colloquia

19 and 26 September

Faculty Colloquia on Engaged Learning

Sponsored by the Student
Engagement Committee



Composition Colloquia

30 September

ENG 0104—David Marquard

26 October

ENG 1050—MJ Braun

16 November

ENG 1060—Dundee Lackey



24 October

Student Engagement in Service-Learning

Michele Fazio

Anita Guynn

Scott Hicks

and other works she had consulted as she sought to widen her acquaintance with the field and improve her skills as a facilitator. This literature, she reported, has left no doubt: writing can indeed be a highly effective source of emotional and even physical healing. Summarizing conclusions reached by a pioneer in research on connections between writing and health, clinical psychologist James W. Pennebaker, Cyndi observed, for example, that participants writing in what Pennebaker calls “emotional disclosure studies” subsequently exhibited “lowered blood pressure, fewer trips to the doctor, . . . fewer absences from work or school, . . . reduced stress, . . . improved immune function and mood,” and even “improved academic performance.” As her own workshop experience made clear, when the emotions being “disclosed” include grief over the death of a loved one, the results can be especially dramatic.

None of the members of Cyndi’s first workshop—all of whom were women who had recently lost children or spouses—had found much if any relief simply talking about their experience with counselors or one another. For a time it appeared that the workshops would prove similarly ineffective. Reluctant to re-engage a world from which they had withdrawn into silence and isolation, the grieving women wrote little in response to Cyndi’s initial prompt and said even less. The ice seemed to break, however, when—after asking the group’s permission to do so—she read them what she herself had just written in response to that same prompt. For whatever reason, perhaps because they felt she truly understood what they were going through, perhaps because she had trusted them enough to reveal some of her own similar feelings and experiences, the members of the group gradually warmed to the writing and

the sharing. Over the weeks that followed, Cyndi told her conference audience, she saw these women who had all but given up on life begin to reconnect with family and friends, regain their sense of humor, even plan for the future. Early on, encouraged by prompts and templates Cyndi had adapted from the work of writers like Joan Didion or had conceived herself, they wrote mostly about those they had lost. One of their number, for example, wrote a piece she called “Brian’s Chair” in memory of her son, who had died not long before after a bolt of lightning crashed down upon him out of a cloudless sky. Celebrating her son’s continuing presence in the life of his family, she focused on the ribbon she had attached to his chair at their dining table.

The presentation this September would seem to have been the culmination, to date, of the labor of love begun with those sad but solacing journal entries years ago. The evening after the session at which she had presented, as she walked the hilly, cobblestone streets of Ustron, Cyndi’s thoughts turned, of course, to her talk. She had known from the start that, given all the issues she felt obliged to address, she would only be able to scratch the surface of some of them. How, she wondered, had her efforts actually been received? At a breakfast gathering the next morning, she shared her concerns with the conference’s keynote speaker, Dr. Greg Zacharias. His response couldn’t have been more encouraging. Zacharias, who is also the Director of the Center for Henry James Studies, assured her that not only had he found the talk intelligent and informative but that—as she was describing what her workshop members had been through, what they wrote, and how they changed—he had found himself very moved as well. And, he added, he was not the only one.

A salient issue the paper raises is the

In Memoriam

Ellen Inman Church Smith
7 Dec. 1966 - 26 Sept. 2011




Ellen crops photos for a layout for the 1990 *Indianhead* in the old yearbook office, now Dial 151. She was Editor-in-Chief for both the 1990 and 1991 editions. That was back in the day, when UNCP was still Pembroke State and journalism was offered by the Communicative Arts Dept., which also included English, theatre, languages, broadcasting, and PR. After earning her BA in Journalism, Ellen worked as a reporter at *The Robesonian*.



Ellen poses with her daughter, Joy Brooke Church, after earning her MA in English Education from UNCP in December 2009. Most recently, Ellen had worked as a teacher at Purnell Swett High School.

one she takes up last: just what is there about writing that gives it the power to heal, to set things right? Perhaps her paper's concluding judgment—"much about how writing yields such benefits remains a mystery"—stems from her sense of the insufficiency of explanations like those she cites in her conclusion, explanations such as this one from Pennebaker, for example: "Once it has been written down . . . the memory and value of a [traumatic experience] has been preserved. There is now less reason to rehearse the event actively." And "perhaps the prospect of some future reader, or an imagined one, might somehow influence the therapeutic outcome of writing." In the end there may well be no fathoming writing's mysterious therapeutic properties, but perhaps we can get a little closer than that. Might it not be that, when our focus is the loss of one so loved as to have seemed a part of us, what we write can become in effect an icon of that loved one, our words become the flesh that is no longer there to touch, to hold? If so, the function of such an icon might not be to free us from indefinitely "rehearsing" our loss but, more simply and more profoundly, to live on within us.

When asked whether she thought "writing as therapy" might have useful applications within the academic community, Cyndi's first thought was of the ways it might benefit students having more than the usual difficulties adjusting to campus life, veterans returning from service abroad, for example. It might even be feasible, she added, to create courses in which students learned to facilitate therapeutic writing programs. If such a course were indeed developed, good students would no doubt be able to master the basics—the prompts, the responses, the promoting of incremental improvement. It is to be hoped they would also possess, or could

acquire, the qualities—the depth of feeling, experience, and knowledge—Cyndi brings to her workshops and to her labors generally. 

Remembering Ellen

By SARA OSWALD

Three or four days before Christmas in 1989, Ellen Inman and I were sitting at a table in the old yearbook office, finishing layouts and copy for the final color spreads for the 1990 *Indianhead*. Everyone else had already left for break, but these spreads needed to be sent to the printer that week, so we were giving up part of our vacation to make sure the deadline was met. We weren't exactly happy to be there, but if you had walked through the darkened, deserted hallways of the Dial Building that day, the main sound you would have heard emanating from the yearbook office would have been laughter—because we were doing something we loved and learning from one another in the process.

That was only my second year as yearbook advisor, and it might have been my last had Ellen not taken on the editor's job after her predecessor had to be dismissed. Anyone interested in the gory details can read Ellen's editorial on page 227 of the 1990 *Indianhead*, which starts: "It began as a nightmare, then quickly turned into a roller coaster ride through Hell." Even so, Ellen asked to serve as editor again for the 1991 edition so that she could "do it right this time." And, of course, she did.

When I heard the sad news of Ellen Inman Church Smith's untimely death in September 2011, that day in December 1989 came to my mind because it encapsulates many of the qualities I so much admired in her: her love of writing and journalism, her joy in learning, her unselfishness, and her courage. Her passing is indeed a loss

ΣΤΔ Members



Sigma Tau Delta gathers in the fall of 2011 to elect officers and welcome new members. Pictured above are Tank Steiner, Daria Bannerman, Blake Davis, Talia Cihla, Brittany Glenn, Amelia Philbrook, Jaclyn Valino, Adrienne Chavis, and advisor Scott Hicks.



December Graduates



Graduate Director Roger Ladd celebrates with Gary Ballard, M.A. in English Education, and Renee Phile, M.A.T. in English 9-12 Specialization, who have just received their degrees in December 2011.

to her family and friends, her former teachers and colleagues, and to the generations of students—and others—who will never have the opportunity of learning from her as I was privileged to do.

After completing her degree in journalism in 1991, Ellen worked as a reporter for *The Robesonian* and then for the Lumber River Council of Governments. As Ellen Church, she returned to UNCP in the new millennium to pursue an MA in English Education. In the final phase of her professional life, Ellen taught at Purnell Swett High School.

Mark Canada recalls that Ellen brought a “special insight” to his graduate Literature and Journalism course because of her background as a reporter. “It was a pleasure teaching Ellen in my graduate class on African American literature,” says Scott Hicks. Her work lives on, Scott notes, in her analysis of Richard Wright’s *Native Son*: <http://www.uncp.edu/home/hickss/taal/wright/index.html>.

For Monika Brown, “Ellen Church Smith remains alive through her positive attitude and her passionate love of learning. In both of my graduate courses she worked very hard and grew significantly as an academic reader and writer. I especially value her paper for the Victorian Age seminar. She explored the treatment of noble working-class heroes by indifferent industrialists in two nineteenth-century British and American novels: *Hard Times* by Dickens and *Life in the Iron Mills* by Rebecca Harding Davis. Drawing on explication of scholarship as well as sensitive close reading of scenes, she persuaded class members of her thesis, which remains timely:

Davis’s and Dickens’s intent was to educate their readers on socioeconomic inequities, but even more, they desired for the readers to connect emotionally

with the characters to solicit empathy in order to elicit social change.”

Graduate Director Roger Ladd remembers Ellen as “a wonderful person and a great student. She was consistently one of the most engaged students I have ever had—she did not have as deep a literature background as some of her classmates, because she was originally a journalist, but she dedicated her full attention to the class she had with me, and to her other classes. Her focus was very impressive. She also had a wonderful attitude throughout her graduate program, even as her professional goals shifted over time. I wish we had more students like her.”

So do I. 📖

News from Sigma Tau Delta

BY BLAKE DAVIS

Sigma Tau Delta has been very busy this year! At the beginning of the semester we elected our new officers: Tank Steiner, president; Brittany Glenn, vice-president; Blake Davis, secretary; and Talia Cihla, treasurer. We have also started a joint fundraiser, along with the English Club and the University Writing Center, in which members voluntarily bake items (e.g., cookies, brownies, muffins, etc.) for us to sell out of the Writing Center. Also, donations of baked goods would be much appreciated!

In addition to our new fundraiser, we are also continuing our collections for the Better Worlds Book Drive. We have placed boxes in the entrance of GPAC and both the upper and lower floors of Dial. Please assist us in this charitable effort by donating your used books. All types of books are accepted. The proceeds will go toward helping these non-profit organizations that work to increase literacy worldwide: Books for Africa,

E&T Holiday Celebration 6 December 2011

E&T faculty and staff gathered in the Dial A-V Theater for a potluck and gift exchange to celebrate the successful conclusion of the fall semester.



Invisible Children, National Center for Family Literacy, Room to Read, and the World-Fund.

Sigma Tau Delta is also pleased to welcome our new members: Daria Bannerman, Gordon Byrd, Adrienne Chavis, Tawanna Johnson, Amelia Philbrook, and Jaclyn Valino. Congratulations to these students on their outstanding academic achievements! 📖

Faculty Activities

MJ BRAUN presented a paper, “‘The College of 2020’: The Rhetoric of Disembodied Labor in Dematerialized Universities,” at the Western States Conference on Rhetoric and Literacy in October 2011.

MARK CANADA has assumed the position of Acting Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Over the past few months, he has been working with Acting Associate Dean Meredith Storms on a number of projects, including the new 2+2 program, designed to encourage faculty-student interaction and promote student success. His essay “Stories of Today: Rebecca Harding Davis’s Investigative Fiction” is scheduled to appear in the summer 2012 issue of *Journalism History*. In May 2011, he presented “Poe and His Contemporaries in a Course on Literature and Journalism” at the American Literature Association conference in Boston. His current projects include a collection of essays with the working title *New Essays on Literature and Journalism in the United States*.

DEANA JOHNSON and her English 0104 students completed a service-learning project on 25 October 2011 at the CIS Academy adjacent to the UNCP campus. In coordination with the Center for Leadership and Service, 30 composition students (two sections) visited 6th and 8th grades classes

and assisted students with writing paragraphs. The goal of the project was to collaborate with teachers at the CIS Academy to meet writing goals for both student groups. CIS students were encouraged to think about topic sentences and word choice as they composed. UNCP students were able to act as mentors in these activities. In addition, students will use this experience as they reflect and write on the topic of college students and community service. All of the UNCP students who participated offered enthusiastic feedback, and of course, the CIS students were very excited to have this positive interaction and attention. “I have done several community service projects with my students over the past several semesters, and each time, my students rate the experience highly. In some cases, we have worked with elementary students; however, this project was even more beneficial for my students because they were assisting developing writers with putting into practice the techniques we have been strengthening during the ENG 0104 class. My students appreciate the opportunity to do something constructive, and they used the experience as a way to formulate ideas for their own writing,” said Ms. Johnson.

JENNIFER KEY read as part of the St. Andrew’s College Writers’ Forum on 20 October 2011; the forum is now in its forty-fourth year. She won the 2011 Astounding Beauty Ruffian Press Chapbook Contest for her manuscript *Ghosts to Whom We Call*, was Runner-up for the 2011 *Tampa Review* Poetry Book Prize awarded by the University of Tampa Press, and was a Finalist for the 2011 National Poetry Series Book Prize. She had two poems accepted by *The Connecticut Review* and a poem accepted for inclusion in a fairy tale anthology forthcoming from Rainbow Crow Press.

E&T Holiday Celebration (continued)



Carolyn Price inspects the gifts on display before making her choice during the white elephant gift exchange.



Kay McClanahan presents a farewell gift from the department to Loreen Bessire, who returned to her home state of Utah later in December.

Farewell, Loreen!




Loreen Bessire poses with her son and Carolyn after packing up her office on her last day on campus.

CYNDI MIECZNIKOWSKI was one of several scholar-teachers invited to review conference sessions prior to this year's Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) in Atlanta for the online journal *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy* (16.1 Fall 2011). The four sessions she reviewed included such topics as the NCTE project to identify and publish "Best Practices" for online writing instruction (OWI), K-16 teacher collaborations on pedagogical research, and the future of the National Writing Project. She also attended and reported on a SIG—"special interest group"—meeting on OWI, where she met Beth Hewett and Scott Warnock, whose books have informed and guided her own OWI course design. Also at this year's conference, Dr. Miecznikowski became one of the founding members of a new SIG dedicated to sustained collaborations among K-16 teacher-scholars; their proposal for an all-day Pre-conference Workshop for next year's convention has been accepted for the 2012 program. In addition, her proposed paper, "What IS 'College Readiness'? Using Reading to Teach Students How to Learn," was also accepted for the 2012 Conference on College Composition and Communication. Finally, in late September, she presented, as described elsewhere in this issue, at an annual international literature conference whose theme this year was "The Self Industry: Therapy and Fiction."

WENDY MILLER was a featured speaker at the Women of Appalachia: Native American Impact, Influence and Intersection Conference at Ohio University-Zanesville in October 2011. Her presentation was titled "Native American Presence in *O Beulah Land* and *The Killing Ground*."

SARA OSWALD served in December 2011 as a judge for the third annual North Carolina College Media Competition; results will be announced at the February 2012 NC College Media Conference in Winston-Salem.

CATHERINE PARISIAN spent five weeks over the summer conducting research on the publication history of Frances Burney at the British Library and the Bibliothèque Nationale. This research was funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. While at the British Library, she was invited to give the talk "Reconstructing the First White House Library" as part of the Library's Twenty-First Century Curator Series. She concluded her overseas travel in Aberdeen, Scotland, at the Eighteenth-Century Scottish Studies conference where she chaired a session on libraries and reading. Upon returning to the States in July, she delivered a paper titled "Alice in Shorthand: A Stenographer's Primer" at the Society for the History of Authorship Reading and Publishing meeting in Washington, DC.

MELISSA SCHAUB presented a paper, "The Serial Reader of *Hard Times* and *North and South*," at the Victorians Institute conference in Myrtle Beach on 22 October 2011. 

Lights, Camera, Action!



Holden Hansen will appear in the film *Arthur Newman, Golf Pro*, which was shot in Wilmington and on location in North Carolina in the fall of 2011.



Holden shares his scene with Colin Firth, shown below with Emily Blunt in another scene from the film.



Holden/Firth

BY JAN GANE

It is no secret to most Robesonians that Colin Firth's latest movie, *Arthur Newman, Golf Pro*, was filmed in North Carolina, including in the Robeson County towns of Fairmont and Lumberton. But locals may not know that Holden Hansen has a role in the film and actually shares his scene (filmed in Wilmington) with the star, Colin Firth, who won the Academy Award in 2011 for his role as King George VI in *The King's Speech*.

The film, directed by Dante Ariola from an original script by Becky Johnston (co-writer for *Prince of Tides*), tells the story of Wallace Avery (Firth) who is unhappy with his job and his home life. Attempting to escape his troubles, Wallace fakes his own death and takes on a new identity as Arthur Newman. In his new life, Wallace meets the lovely and insecure Mike (played by Golden Globe winner Emily Blunt), who is breaking away from her past as well. The pair begin to break into vacated homes and assume the owners' identities, but in the midst of their charade, they realize that they really care about one another.

Holden describes his experience shooting the scene with Firth as "a thrilling event." Holden's character, Beauregard Tulley (aka Dying Man), steps off a bus and collapses. Wallace comes to his aid and performs mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, but it is too late, and Beauregard dies. All is not lost, however, Holden explains, because the event proves to be pivotal in the relationship between Wallace and Mike. Wallace, who begins to experience flashbacks about the moment of Beauregard's death, discovers that during the attempted rescue Mike had stolen Beauregard's wallet. After learning the dead man's identity, he and Mike visit Mrs. Tulley

to explain what happened to her husband. When the woman refuses to accept the truth, both characters decide to face their own truths and abandon their borrowed identities.

When questioned about what it was like to work so closely with Colin Firth, Holden laughed and said, "When I was first introduced to him, I had to contain myself. I had met famous people before but not this famous. I stood there thinking, 'Can you tell I'm in awe? Do you think about that because you're gonna give me CPR!'" He said they all made jokes about the intimate nature of the scene, with Blunt saying "Oh, he's a good kisser!" and Holden offering Firth breath mints. After the final take of twenty, Firth said to Holden, "Good job, my friend. That's not easy to do"—a fine compliment from such an accomplished actor.

But Holden is an accomplished actor as well and has years of experience as a director and as managing director for the Carolina Civic Center and GPAC. Anyone who has seen him direct or perform will attest to his dramatic skills, and his professional acting résumé includes a long list of stage, television, and film work. Holden explained that his professional experiences help to shape his teaching, from the business end to techniques used on stage. He can even identify with the nerves that can plague an audition. Holden also stressed how much he enjoys teaching; in many ways, becoming a professor has refueled his desire to act and has allowed him to pursue additional training himself. His students are surely the lucky beneficiaries of his love for acting and his practical experience in a field where only approximately 3% find paying work on a regular basis. That being said, Holden Hansen agrees that his current position in life as professor/actor is really the best of both worlds. 📺

E & Theatre

2011-2012 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.

Chicago

Music and Lyrics by John Kander and Fred Ebb

Book by Bob Fosse

Directed by Hal Davis and Natalie Smith

9-12 November 2011



The Odd Couple (Female Version)

By Neil Simon

Directed by Chet Jordan

22-25 February 2012



The Crucible

By Arthur Miller

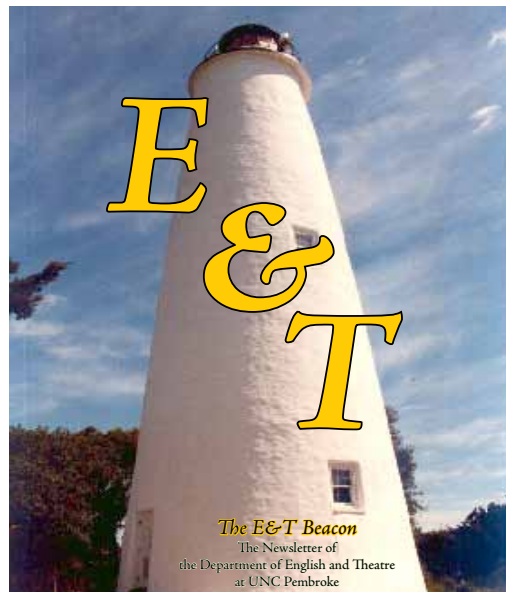
Directed by Holden Hansen

19-21 April 2012



Directed by Hal Davis and Natalie Smith

9-12 November 2011



The E&T Beacon

The Newsletter of
the Department of English and Theatre
at UNC Pembroke

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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/et/news/