



T I D E L I N E S

UNCW ENGLISH DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

LOOKING FORWARD:

Spring 1998

Writer -in- Residence
Pulitzer Prize-
Winning Poet

Philip Levine

Visiting Writer-in-
Residence
Author **Bob Reiss**
Two-Week Intensive
Workshop in
Screenwriting
April 1998

ALSO

Professor Walter Hoelbling of Karl-Franzens University in Graz, Austria, will speak on American Studies in Europe on Friday, January 9, at 12:00 noon in the Faculty Common, Morton Hall

See **Professor Bill Henderson** (NC State University) as Elvis -- The author of *I Elvis and Stark Raving Elvis* gives a reading and performance on Friday, January 16, 8:00 PM in Kenan Auditorium



Inspiration Leads the Way

In May 1997, Dr. Janet Ellerby became the Masters of Arts (M.A.) degree program coordinator for the UNCW English Department, replacing Dr. Brooks Dodson who served for seven years.

Following the inspiration of the outstanding literary women that she studies and teaches, Professor Ellerby is dedicating her talents to increased leadership responsibilities. In addition to coordinating UNCW's Women's Studies minor, she facilitates the monthly Feminist Colloquium during the academic year. Professor Ellerby also earned the Chancellor's Teaching Excellence Award in August 1997 - showing just how well she practices what she teaches. "For me, the most gratifying



Professor Janet Ellerby

part of being M.A. Coordinator is having the chance to work closely with M.A. candidates to build their own unique programs that best suit their needs and goals," said Professor Ellerby. "It is personally and intellectually rewarding to be a part of this challenging, exhilarating time in their lives."

Hailing from Pasadena, California, Professor Ellerby holds a B.S. degree from the University of Oregon, an M.A. degree in English from California State University, Northridge, and a Ph.D. in English from the University of Washington. Building on her extensive publishing background, Professor Ellerby is currently working on a book about literary memoirs, particularly those

that involve family secrets and their psychological effects.

As the fall semester chugs along, Professor Ellerby is working with the M.A. committee to plan a new emphasis involving a composition/rhetoric/critical literacy track. This emphasis will enable students to focus their M.A.

Professor Ellerby said, "This new track will offer students a background in theories of rhetoric, composition, and critical literacy, an understanding of language (both linguistic and philosophical), a background in the history/psychology/philosophy of reading and writing, and training in critical pedagogy. The clientele for the track could be students who plan to be teachers of writing in community and two-year colleges, secondary school teachers, full-time lecturers in four-year colleges, administrators and workers in community-based literacy programs, as well as those who plan a Ph.D. in rhetoric and composition.

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The Write Stuff

English Department's newest professor, Wendy Brenner, is the sort who parlays a wrenched back into a published article - after snapping up the assistant professorship with UNCW despite her pain and a field of 80+ competitors vying for the job. Her bad back editorial entitled "Oh, My Aching Vacation" appeared in the October 1997 issue of *Travel & Leisure* magazine. Fortunately for us, Professor Brenner is appearing daily at UNCW. During 1997-98 academic year, she is teaching undergraduate and graduate fiction writing courses.

"This English Department is not like any other I know of," said Professor Brenner. "The strong sense of community and genuine excitement about teaching, writing, and scholarship are tremendous and very energizing. I am thrilled and very grateful to be part of it. I love Wilmington and UNCW."

Professor Brenner's writing expertise is primarily in the short story genre, though she is currently working on her first novel. *Large Animals in Everyday Life*, her collection of short stories which was published recently by W. W. Norton, won the Flannery O'Connor Award from the University of Georgia Press. Her subtle sense of humor and social conscience are reflected in the characters of her stories - including the oysters' point of view on irradiation, a child's fixation on a wallpaper horse, and the girl who relates a little too well to her polar bear mascot's suit.

Professor Brenner's students find her generous with encouragement and information on contests and getting published and about English Department activities. M.F.A. student Rhonda Franklin said, "Professor Brenner holds a B.A. in creative writing from Oberlin College and an M.F.A. from the University of Florida. Her background includes such diverse activities as three years working in production at the Chicago Comedy Showcase and seven years of competitive horseback riding."

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Professor
Wendy Brenner



Inspiration Leads the Way

(Continued from page 1)

"Also, the track could include a component of service - for instance, students could become actively involved in a university or city writing project or in a literacy agency."

Professor Ellerby's idea of practical experience is supported by an English Department proposal for graduate internships

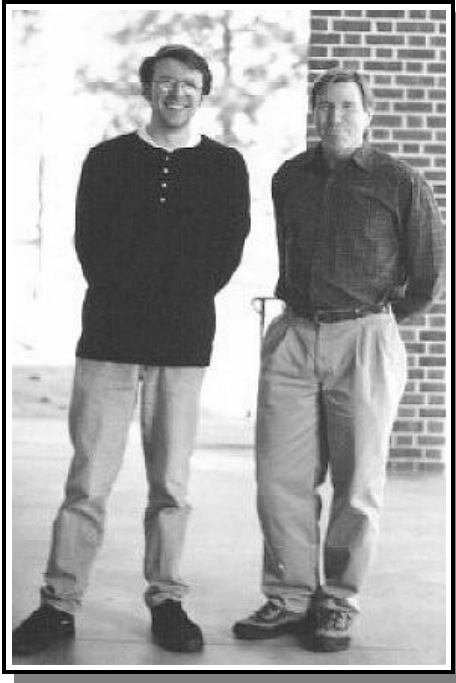
(English 598) which is expected to be approved by the Graduate School for Fall 1998.

Speaking of **proposals** -- during this Christmas vacation in California, Professor Ellerby will exchange wedding vows with Dr. John Clifford. Talk about causes celebre - she has them from all directions! Congratulations Professor Ellerby!



Honorable Direction

High-achieving honors students have a new advocate in English Department's Dr. Bill Atwill. This fall, Professor Atwill was appointed associate director of the UNCW Honors Scholars Program, and English majors interested in



Professor Bill Atwill (r) with honors student David Kmiec.

checking out the program now have a very convenient resource in Morton Hall.

"I was honored to be asked to serve in this capacity by program director, Dr. Diane Levy," said Professor Atwill. "This is an opportunity to work closely with many of the brightest and most motivated students at UNCW. A substantial number of honors scholars are choosing English as a major, so our department has already directly benefited from UNCW's efforts to recruit

and award high-achieving students."

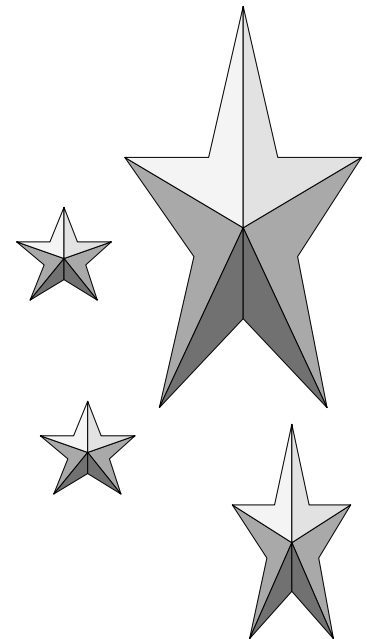
Now in its fourth year, the Honors Program provides academically talented students with a variety of innovative and unique educational experiences both in and out of the classroom. To encourage discussion and faculty-student interaction in seminar settings, classes for honors students are small – generally not over 20 students – which allows for the academic excitement that happens when curiosity, critical thinking, and independent work skills are stimulated. Many basic studies courses will have a section designated as "Honors" and be taught by award-winning faculty from various departments. First- and second-year students also enroll in thematically related interdisciplinary seminars that are team-taught by faculty from different subject areas.

In their junior and senior years, honors scholars propose and carry out a "capstone" experience in their major. This departmental honors project involves close interaction with a faculty mentor and directed independent research on a topic. A number of students in English have gone on to present their theses as papers at professional conferences and to expand on their research in graduate school.

Beyond the classroom, honors scholars are given the chance to take advantage of challenging and exciting op-

portunities enhancing both their social and intellectual horizons. Among those opportunities are living in an honors residence hall with other scholars; an annual Lyceum trip during fall break to cities such as Washington, D.C., Charleston, SC, and Savannah, GA; participation in service-learning experiences; and free admission to some cultural events in Wilmington.

If you are not currently an honors student, the door is not closed. Students who meet specific Honors Program requirements may enter the program during the sophomore year, and juniors/seniors may be eligible for the Departmental Honors program. Students interested in applying should call the Honors Program at 962-4181.



Teaching Across Cultures

For most college students, graduation means going out into the real world to find a job. While some students will be lucky enough to continue to live and work in Wilmington, most will have to look elsewhere for employment. Two UNCW alumni, Tracy Bleeker (1994) and Jamie Trost (1996), looked across the ocean for work and found much more.

An avid traveler who took advantage of opportunities to study

abroad while working on her B.S. in Psychology, Tracy discovered the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program (JET) through a friend and applied to teach English in Japan. "There are many programs that place teachers throughout Asia," said Tracy, "but the JET program is the largest and most organized. Currently, nearly 5,000 foreigners are teaching English in Japan through this program."

After applying to JET in December 1994, Tracy was interviewed in February and notified of her acceptance in March 1995. Four months later, she flew to Japan to begin her first year of teaching English to elementary school children in Maesawa, a

northern Japanese town of about 15,000 people.

Tracy advised that it helps to have travel experience when you apply to the JET program. Part of the application process involves providing two personal references related to teaching experience,

"... that's what it's all about to teach in another country, after all, to see their world and to show them yours."

travel abroad experience, and character. She noted that that they seem to be looking for well-rounded, open-minded candidates who seem eager to learn about Japanese culture.

Being the first foreigner to visit Maesawa, Tracy noted that the Japanese folks treated her like a celebrity during her two-year stay: "It was very easy to make friends and to become involved in town and school life quickly. Also, the students were so much fun!"

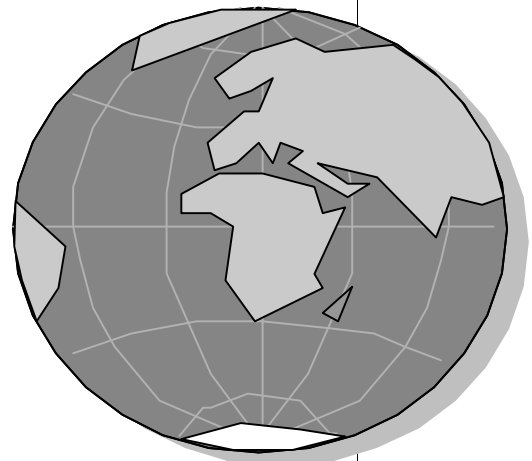
Now back in the United States and enrolled in UNCW's M.F.A. program, Tracy says teaching abroad proved to be one of the most rewarding experiences of her life.

Armed with his B.A. in English, Jamie Trost is currently teaching English in a remote Japanese farming village, Bisei-Cho. "I'm the only English speaker here, the only westerner. When I first heard about the JET

program, I was on the National Student Exchange Program at Humboldt State University in Arcata, CA. I filled out my application and was picked for an interview in San Francisco, where I was working for the MoJo Wire, the web site for Mother Jones magazine."

Jamie reports that he looks forward to learning as much as he is teaching: "I've got one student, Oishi-san, translated Big Stone -- I sometimes call him 'Big Stone Man,' which embarrasses him a little. Big Stone Man wants to know what my part of the world is like, wants to compare it to his, and show me the differences. We're both curious, and that's what it's all about to teach in another country, after all, to see their world and to show them yours."

To learn more about teaching opportunities abroad, contact the office of International Programs at 962-3685 or contact JET directly at 1-800-INFO-JET.



Practically Working

Where can students earn course credits and maximize their chances for gainful employment after graduation? Internships programs increasingly provide students with hands-on experience in their future vocational fields and provide UNCW course credit at the same time.



Internship Coordinator
Kelly Easton

The English Department's program is going strong thanks to the efforts of Internship Coordinator Kelly Easton and other

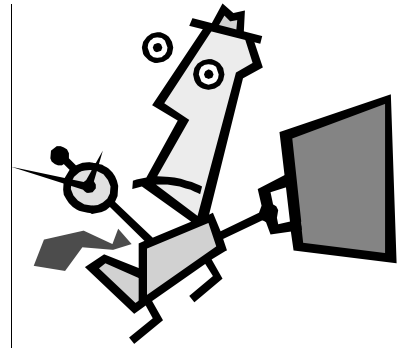
faculty who serve as internship advisers. Ms. Easton, who is an English Department lecturer, became the new department coordinator in May 1997.

"As interns, students currently have the opportunity to work in positions in which earlier graduates might have only dreamed," Ms. Easton said. "For instance, the agreement with Screen Gems Studio is giving UNCW students the chance to operate equipment on actual feature films. Other interns are working in television newsrooms, writing for newspapers with their own bylines, writing press releases in public relations departments, and teaching creative writing. On several occasions, the in-

ternships have led to job offers, and you can't beat that."

The English Department's first intern with Screen Gems Studio, Bill Gamble, performed so impressively that he was offered a job working on a Robert Altman film. Success stories like Bill's are made possible by the liaison formed by English Department Chair Phil Furia with Screen Gems President Frank Capra, Jr. The agreement with Screen Gems also stemmed from UNCW's development of a film studies program involving the cooperation of English, Art and Theatre, and Communications Departments.

Internship opportunities continue to expand, including positions in a publishing house, New Hanover Medical Center, and North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher. The UNCW Graduate School is currently considering an English Department proposal for graduate internships for M.A. and M.F.A. candidates, which will hopefully be in place for Fall 1998. Through internships, students can find meaningful educational experience and the door to future employ-



ment opening a bit wider.

As an editor at Penguin Putnam recently wrote to Visiting Distinguished Professor Paul Wilkes: "Students need to intern until their backs break...it's the difference between getting in the door and getting a boilerplate 'no thank you' note."

Students interested in internships should contact Kelly Easton at 962-3831.



Alice Fulton, Visiting Writer-in-Residence, Fall 1997

Alice Fulton, one of America's most successful poets, visited UNCW English Department for a week-long workshop during Fall 1997 as its second writer-in-residence. Professor Fulton's UNCW week included conducting an intensive graduate poetry writing workshop and presenting a reading of her own poetry to a packed Cameron Auditorium crowd. Her visit also included two informal sessions – on Tuesday, she delivered a provocative lecture on avant-garde poetics, and on Thursday, she spoke on her special interest in songwriting and played a recording of a performance of a song cycle that she had written.

Students in Professor Fulton's poetry writing workshop found it a dazzling complement to the already impressive M.F.A. writing workshop offerings. M.F.A. poet Sally McMillan said, "I feel really privileged to have been able to work so closely with a writer who is as exciting a teacher as she is a poet."

Importantly, Professor Fulton's visit was geared not just toward creative writers but for literature classes as well. Dr.

Kathy Rugoff devoted time in her American and British Poetry Since 1945 class to study selected poems from Professor Ful-



Poet Alice Fulton during her October reading.

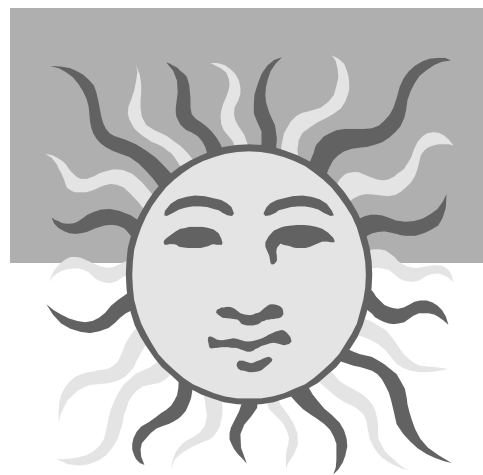
ton's recent book, *Sensual Math*, and her earlier book, *Palladium*. She invited Professor Fulton to discuss her poetry informally in the class. Professor Fulton answered student questions on subjects pertaining to distinctions between modern and postmodern poetry, to perspectives in feminist literary theory, and to connections among the arts.

Professor Rugoff said, "I was struck not only by the depth of Fulton's discussion but also by the generous, warm spirit that she

brought to the class."

Professor Fulton authored four poetry collections which won her the prestigious John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellowship as well as fellowships from the Ingram Merrill and Guggenheim Foundations. Currently, she is a professor of English at The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

This academic year is shaping up to be truly extraordinary for the poetry program at UNCW. During Spring 1998, one of America's most distinguished literary figures – the Pulitzer Prize winning poet Philip Levine – will spend the semester working with UNCW English Department, but that's another article.



Making Waves

Faculty Acclamations

Congratulations to . . .

Lavonne Adams published her short story, "Rendition of Things Held Dear," in *Princeton Arts Review* and her short story, "Dance," in *Poet's Edge Magazine*; her essay, "The Holly Pageant" was reprinted in *Voices from Home: The North Carolina Prose Anthology*.

Stan Colbert published an essay on his mother as a tv star in *Creative Screenwriting*.

Janet Ellerby published an essay on Julia Kristeva in the *Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning*.

Phil Furia published an essay, "Something to Sing About: A Centenary Celebration of American's Great Lyricists" in *The American Scholar*.

Lu Huntley-Johnston published an essay on grammar and literacy education in *North Carolina Journal of Teacher Education*.

Rebecca Lee published a short story, "The Banks of the Vistula" in *The Atlantic Monthly* and received the Rona Jaffe award at a sumptuous dinner ceremony in the Rainbow Room of Rockefeller Center.

"Dreiser Studies," pace **Keith Newlin**, is now "officially" a publication of the UNCW English Department.

Sally Sullivan received an award for her submission to the N.C. Arts Council Poetry Contest which allowed her to study in Vermont for one month during summer 1997.

Michael White received an \$8,000 North Carolina Arts Council Fellowship Award for 1997. Judges for this year's competition included Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Yusef Komunyakaa.

Paul Wilkes published an essay on hospice care in *The New York Times Magazine*.

Grad Students

M.F.A. student **Bill Dinome's** scholarly bibliographic study of Leslie Silko has been published in UCLA's *American Indian Culture & Research Journal*.

M. A. student **Darren Hughes** was awarded a summer 1997 research grant by UNCW Graduate School to do research on using hypertext in classroom instruction.

Nancy Jones, M.F.A. stu-

dent, received the UNCW Graduate Teaching Excellence Award in August 1997. Also, her Survey of Scholarship and Criticism on Nabokov's *Lolita* has appeared in the latest issue of the *Bulletin of Bibliography*.

Undergraduate Boasts

Randy Connor won a \$1,000 undergraduate research fellowship. His project is an interactive web site for Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Liz Kiser was accepted into NCSU's Master Program for Technical Writing with a teaching assistantship that includes an \$8,000 stipend, tuition waiver, and health benefits.

Michelle Potter won a \$1,000 undergraduate research fellowship.

Alumni Anchorings

1993 M.A. graduate **Meredith Cornell** accepted a tenure track position with Marshall University in West Virginia.

1997 M.A. graduates **Kara Davis** and **Cheryl Saba** are teaching at Cape Fear Community College. **John Ware** is teaching part-time at Brunswick Community College.

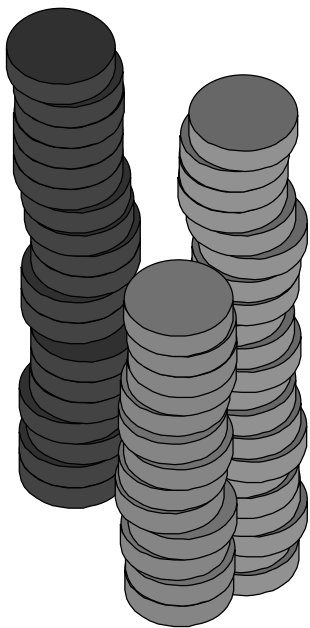
Editors' Note:

Thanks to this issue's contributors: Bill Atwill, Tracy Bleeker, Kelly Easton, Jan Keller, Lisa Mincey, Kathy Rugoff, Jamie Trost, Michael White.

Tidelines welcomes input for these columns. Please let us hear from you.

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