

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA WILMINGTON

The Coast Line

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Newsletter of the Department of Creative Writing





UNC Wilmington's *New Lookout Books* Imprint Hits Cover of *NYT Book Review* with Debut Volume

by Dana Fischetti

The debut volume from Lookout Books, the new literary imprint of the Department of Creative Writing at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, was greeted with glowing reviews by the *New York Times* and *LA Times*. The book, *Binocular Vision: New & Selected Stories* by Edith Pearlman, was featured on the cover of the *NYT Book Review's* Jan. 16 edition.

All of this attention is happily overwhelming for members of the creative writing faculty, who have nurtured the idea of a literary imprint at UNCW since 2007.

"To have enthusiastic reviews by two of the major publications in the country is just incredible," said Emily Smith, director of the UNCW Publishing Lab and co-founding executive director of Lookout Books. "Several publishing colleagues have indicated that this is unprecedented. It's likely we're the only independent press, and certainly the only teaching press, to have its debut book land on the cover of the *New York Times Book Review*."

Smith founded Lookout Books with Ben George, editor of *Ecotone* – the Department of Creative Writing's award-winning literary magazine – and now editorial director of Lookout. The imprint grew out of the university's decade-old Publishing Lab, a teaching press that offers students the opportunity to learn the publishing process through apprenticeship. Students were involved in every step of publishing *Binocular Vision*, including discussions about the selection and order of the stories, as well as researching the cover design and typesetting.

Smith and George also received help from a rotating advisory board of creative writing faculty that included at various points department chair Philip Gerard, David Gessner, Clyde Edgerton, Sarah Messer, Robert Siegel and Rebecca Lee.

Lookout Books publishes trade paperback originals and seeks "emerging and historically underrepresented voices, as well as works by established writers overlooked by commercial houses."



Edith Pearlman with Emily Smith and Ben George

George said Pearlman, who has had two stories published in *Ecotone*, was the perfect choice for the imprint's debut author. At age 74, Pearlman has won three O. Henry Prizes, her stories have appeared in *Best American Short Stories* and *The Pushcart Prize* anthology, and she has published three previous collections. Still, her writing had not achieved widespread recognition.

"She's really an exquisite writer, but she's not so widely known," George said. "We saw an opportunity with this volume of new and selected stories to do a grand book for her. And we do have a luxury that some commercial publishers, which have to look primarily to the bottom line, don't. Our tagline for Lookout is 'a haven for books that matter.' It's wonderful to be concerned only with that."

Recognition for Pearlman has increased exponentially since the publication of *Binocular Vision*. In his review, David Ulin of the *LA Times* laments that he had never heard of Pearlman before reading this new volume, but quickly adds, "Had I been familiar with Pearlman for all those years, I would have been deprived of the great joy of discovering her."

"It's heartening to me that a book published by a small press, with zero advertising budget, can find its readers," said Smith of the critical acclaim. "With the tremendous help of colleagues, we wrote to hundreds of reviewers and booksellers. The campaign's early success proves that the community of passionate readers, sales reps and booksellers is alive and well."

Lookout Books is currently working on its second short story collection, Steve Almond's *God Bless America*, which will appear this fall.

For more information about Lookout Books, visit www.lookout.org.

A BIG Year for Writers in Action

Thanks to the wonderful teaching support of Kathryn Miller, Jade Benoit, Sam Deal, Kris Lockridge, Anna Sutton, John Mortara, Mike Bull, Katherine Webb, Meagan Simmons, Keith Kopka and Joanna Mulder, Writers in Action was able to reach out to 12 schools over the past two semesters.

Our participating schools have grown over the years from a single elementary school to eight elementary schools, three middle schools and one high school, in addition to our collaborative program with Duke University, Teens Out Loud.

We are really proud of the teachers' dedication to Writers in Action, devoting their time each week, some teaching more than one class, all for the sake of their passion: writing.

Thank you, friends
The Writers in Action Coordinators

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Interview with Edith Pearlman

CL: You recently published your collection *Binocular Vision* with Lookout Books, the literary imprint of the Department of Creative Writing at UNCW. How was this process? How does it compare to your past experience with publishing houses?

EP: I received more attention from the staff of Lookout Books and the students helping with the production than I ever received before, and it was of the highest quality.

CL: *Binocular Vision* has been getting a lot of much-deserved attention from the press, including a glowing Jan 16 review in *The New York Times*. This is a triumph for a small independent press (especially for its first release). How do you feel about this?

EP: Grateful and proud.

CL: I heard that you write your stories first on the typewriter and then rewrite (while revising) in Word documents. How would you describe this process?

EP: You heard a slightly askew version of my process. I write my stories first on the typewriter, and then revise and revise and revise, still on the typewriter. Every story is typed onto a new blank set of pages, five or six times, incorporating the scrawled corrections and crossings out and insertions on the typed set of pages immediately preceding. That means that each word must be considered and reconsidered and must earn its place in the story. Only the final several drafts go onto the computer.

CL: Where do you find inspiration for your stories?

EP: Experience, observation, dream, memory, invention, hearsay.

CL: How long does it take you to write a story?

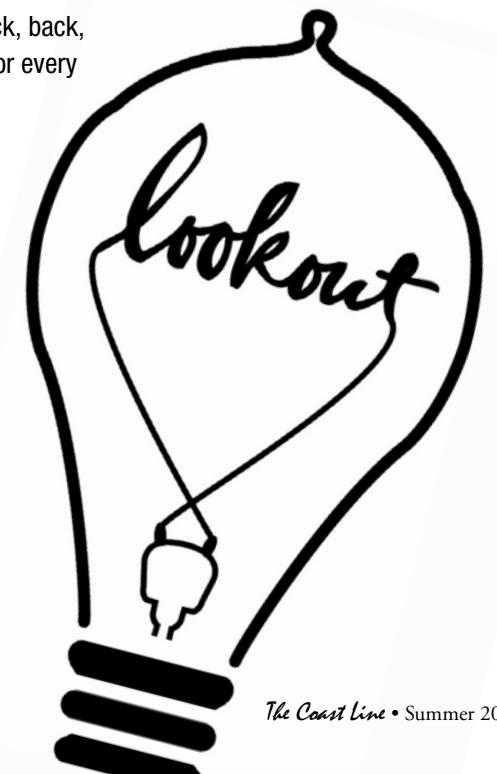
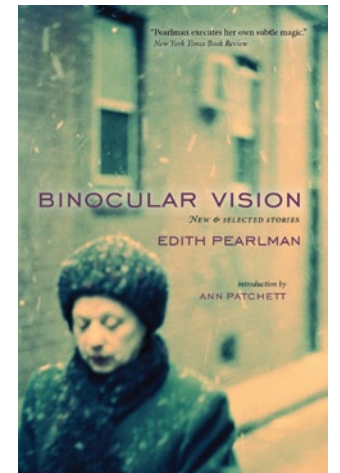
EP: Two months in total time, three months in elapsed time. I write a story in a month, put it in the drawer and take it out in 30 days, rewrite it for another month.

CL: Do you reread your own work?

EP: While I'm working, all the time. After publication, yes, from time to time, especially if I'm reading it aloud to a group.

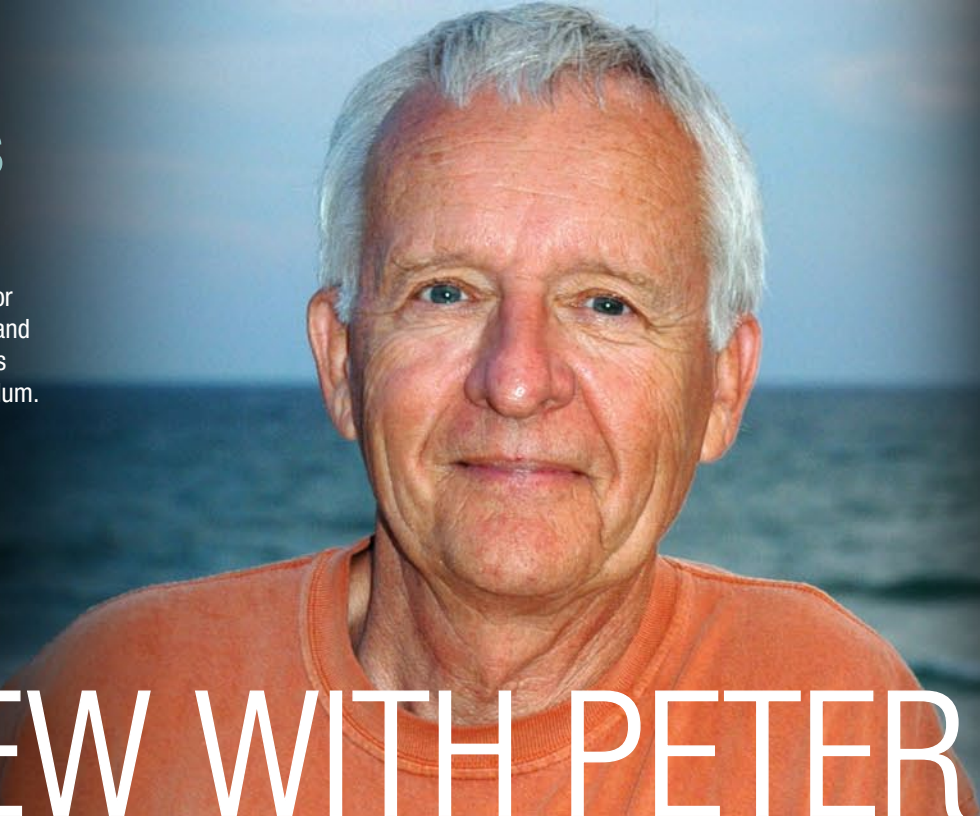
CL: What advice would you give to aspiring writers/MFA students?

EP: Read, read, read, read, read. Read newspapers, magazines, journals. Read the generation before your own and the generation before that. Go back, back, back until you reach Aesop. For every hour you spend writing spend three more reading.



SPRING VISITING WRITERS

The Department of Creative Writing is committed to bringing the best authors in all genres to be part of our writing community. Visiting writers spend a month or semester living and teaching among our own students and faculty. Their workshops, critiques, informal discussions and public readings richly complement our own curriculum.



INTERVIEW WITH PETER MAKUCK

Peter Makuck is the author of seven books and chapbooks of poetry, *Long Lens* (BOA Editions, Ltd., 2010), *Off-Season in the Promised Land* (BOA Editions, Ltd., 2005), *Against Distance* (BOA Editions, Ltd., 1997), *Shorelines* (Green Tower Press, 1995), *The Sunken Lightship* (BOA Editions, Ltd., 1990), *Pilgrims* (Ampersand Press, 1987) and *Where We Live* (BOA Editions, Ltd., 1982). Makuck is also the author of two short story collections, *Costly Habits* (University of Missouri Press, 2002), which was nominated for the Pen/Faulkner Award, and *Breaking and Entering* (University of Illinois Press, 1981), as well as the book of criticism, *An*

Open World: Essays on Leslie Norris (Camden Press, 1994). Makuck founded the national poetry journal *Tar River Poetry* in 1978 and served as editor of the journal until 2006. He received five honorable mentions in *Best American Short Stories* and his story “Filling the Igloo” was included in *The Best of the Southern Review*. He received the Charity Randall Citation award from the International Poetry Forum in Pittsburgh in 1993 and the Zoe Kincaid Brockman Award for the best book of poems by a North Carolinian in 1989. His poems, stories, essays and reviews have appeared in *The American Scholar*, *The Georgia Review*, *The Gettysburg Review*, *The Hudson Review*, *The Nation*, *North American Review*, *Poetry*, *The Sewanee Review*, *The Southern Review*, *The Virginia Quarterly Review* and *The Yale Review*.

CL: First off, thank you very much for visiting our program. What has your experience here been like?

PM: It was a thoroughly positive experience. I had no prior opinions about UNCW, but came away assured it’s a quality institution. Compared to other departments I’ve been in, creative writing seems a very harmonious place, a fertile environment for writers, with wonderful facilities. A number of faculty members went out of their way to be friendly and welcoming to me. An amusing thing happened before my first class. I was walking around campus to get my bearings and on the sidewalk ahead of me were four students, talking loudly. One of them said, “I hate poetry, man, absolutely hate it.” It made me laugh. A prankster myself, I looked around, thinking somebody was playing a joke on me. Later that afternoon, I met the workshop members for the first time, a bright and lively group. As far as I could tell, none of them hated poetry!

CL: Where do you find inspiration? And, how do you handle the times when you are feeling less “inspired”?

PM: I’m not a believer in some kind of mystical inspiration. Poems and stories usually come from my own experiences, imaginatively remade of course. Place has always been important to me, often a trigger for poems. Since moving down to Bogue Banks 15 years ago, I find myself writing about the ocean, about offshore fishing, the piers, shrimping, about sandpipers and pelicans, scuba diving and other watery subjects. I’ve gotten the reputation of being a poet of the Carolina coast, but I write about a lot more than that. Occasionally something that I’ve seen, overheard or experienced will marinate for a long time before finding its way onto paper. More typically, however, I’ll realize the lyric or narrative potential of an experience almost while it’s happening. I keep a journal and into the journal will go a sketch. Then from the sketch a poem or story will begin to take shape. Sometimes reading someone else’s poem or story for a book review will kindle a memory of my own, and I’m off. Maybe when I’m less

“inspired” I write book reviews and wait patiently for something to happen.

CL: What is your approach to revision? How much and how do you revise?

PM: I doubt I can say anything new about revision. I have a friend, who revises and trims as he writes so that when the last period appears on the page, that’s it. When I’m writing a poem or a story, I let it all hang out so to speak. Then I start trimming, but sometimes adding touches here and there. I have a checklist:

- Best possible title?
- An engaging opening line?
- Imagery?
- Too much generalization?
- Lines clotted or too busy?
- Clichés?
- Unnecessary adjectives?
- Etc., etc.

Once in a great while in your writing life an angel will hand you a freebee that needs very little revision, but most of the time you’re working through 10 to 30 drafts or more.

CL: You write poetry, stories, and nonfiction. How do you find the transition between genres? What challenges/rewards do you encounter with each one?

PM: Good question. At the moment, I’m finishing a five-book omnibus review for *The Hudson Review*. One of the books is William Trowbridge’s *Ship of Fool* [sic]. This wildly funny collection of poems had me laughing out loud. Long ago I realized I don’t have that gift for humor, especially in poems. You’d be hard put to find any laughs in my first few books. I do, however, like to laugh and discovered that my humorous side manages to find expression more easily in the situations and dialogue of short fiction. The reward of poetry, on the other hand, is that a rough draft can be had fairly quickly. Fiction, obviously, takes longer to complete, but the attraction of that genre, for me, is the pleasure of characters and opposing points of view.

Speaking of viewpoint or opinion, the personal essay provides a kind of freedom that you wouldn’t normally have in a poem or a story. Some years ago I published an essay entitled “The Trouble with

Smitty,” dealing with my own history as a teenage gun nut. Through narrative detail and conflict, I try to make a point about gun ownership without heavy-handed sermonizing. The essay was reprinted in *The Sun* and drew a certain amount of attention, probably because guns are such a controversial subject.

As regards “transition,” one of the benefits of working in more than one genre is that you have options when, say, you get stuck about where to go in a story. No problem. Put the story on the back burner and work on a poem or a review or an essay. Sooner or later a solution to the problem with the story will suggest itself.

CL: You founded *Tar River Poetry* and served as editor for almost 30 years. Can you talk about this experience? How did it inform (and how was it informed by) your own position as a writer?

PM: Well, I had no interest in being an editor and founding the journal was part of the deal when I was hired at ECU, but editing turns out to have been a rewarding education. I suppose that my own tastes and biases are apparent in the back issues

up to 2006 when I turned things over to Luke Whisnant, who was my assistant editor. One of my biases developed from the truckloads of poems about poetry that arrived at the office, or ekphrastic poems about Van Gogh, Hopper et al, or poems about Keats, or other fad subjects. What this taught me as a poet was *go and do otherwise*. But I wasn’t so hard-nosed that I couldn’t be knocked over by a first-rate poem about poetry and accept it. The war between formalism and free verse had no importance for me. Though my own poetry is mostly in open form, I was happy to publish good sonnets, villanelles, sestinas and so on. As an editor, you learn a lot about what not to do as a writer, subjects or pretentious mannerisms to stay away from. Editing makes you more critical of your own work. But the editor who thinks he is his own best editor has a fool for an editor.

CL: Do you have any general advice for aspiring writers?

PM: Yes, turn off your cell phones, take a long walk, look around, and make notes. The rich particulars you don’t notice can never make it into one of your poems.

Paul Lisicky is the author of *Lawnboy* and *Famous Builder* and two upcoming books: *The Burning House*, a novel (2011), and *Unbuilt Projects*, short prose pieces (2012). His work has been widely anthologized and has appeared in *Ploughshares*, *The Iowa Review*, *Story Quarterly*, *Gulf Coast* and *Five Points*. He's taught in graduate writing programs at Cornell, Rutgers-Newark, Sarah Lawrence and Antioch Los Angeles. His awards include fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the James Michener/Copernicus Society and the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, where he was twice a fellow. He currently teaches at New York University and lives in New York City. In 2011-12, he will be the New Voices Visiting Writer in the MFA Program at Rutgers-Camden.

INTERVIEW WITH PAUL LISICKY



CL: First off, thank you very much for sharing your time with our program. What has your experience here been like?

PL: I was here for the spring 2004 semester, and it's been an experience to come back seven years later. The city, the river, the beach, the birds, the trees – all of it had imprinted itself in me more deeply than I knew. I seem to know where everything is. At the same time, I think the program is in a really good place right now, and I feel lucky to be working with such excellent writers.

CL: Would you talk a little bit about *Unbuilt Projects*, your forthcoming anthology of short prose pieces? How do they compare to the novels you've written? What are the challenges/rewards of working in each form? What sorts of ideas do you find best suited for a novel vs. a piece of short fiction?

PL: I've always felt at home in the shorter form, but for years I fell into that old trap where you equate duration with depth. Then, my mother was diagnosed with dementia. Her state of mind challenged everything I knew about identity, character, narrative, emotion, time. Who are we if our truth shifts every two minutes? The short, disjunctive piece seemed to be the only form that made sense to me for a while. I've always been interested in pitting one layer of time against another – none of my books are exactly linear – but I gave myself permission to compress and leap in *Unbuilt Projects*.

CL: Who are some of your favorite authors?

PL: Flannery O'Connor, Denis Johnson, Joy Williams, Mary Gaitskill. Among newer writers: Sarah Shun-lien Bynum, Salvatore Scibona, Victor LaValle and Paul Harding. I'm a great fan of lists, but I'm leaving so many good people out.

CL: In workshop, you were talking about the complexity of figuring out what a piece of fiction is "about," what aspects you want to focus on as you tell each story. Could you talk a little bit about this process? Have you ever, in your own writing, figured out what you want your book to focus on while writing and then had to backtrack?

PL: About-ness is such a tricky thing. I don't think we ever want our work to be wholly explainable or to support a thesis. We want it to be mysterious. We want it to move like music. But we also want it to be bound by meaning. A lot of that meaning is already embedded in our metaphors, whether we know it or not. The trick is to write toward a space that knows more than we do. And that often involves throwing out the original plan.

CL: What is your approach to revision? How much and how do you revise?

PL: I think that that's determined by the individual piece. I have a one-page story that I actually wrote in an airport baggage claim that came to me fully formed. Then I have a novel that went through probably a hundred drafts. For years, I thought it was going to be a multi-voiced narrative at 350 pages, then after six years, I winnowed it down to one voice, half the original length. The hardest thing is to pay attention to what the piece wants to be. How to turn off all those external voices and listen to what's there?

CL: Do you have any general advice for aspiring writers?

PL: Flaubert said it well: "The library of a writer should be composed of five or six books, sources that he should reread every day. As for the others, it is good to know them, and that's all."

UPDATE FROM THE CRW-GSA

by Ariana Nash

Photos by Kiki Johnson

The Department of Creative Writing's Graduate Student Association (CRW-GSA) is the organization dedicated to the M.F.A. program's student life. While in the past it has been focused on raising money for the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP), in recent years the CRW-GSA has begun to serve as an open forum and advocate for student interests and concerns.

This year's Creative Writing Graduate Student Association representatives were Nick Miller, president; Ariana Nash, third-year adviser; and Anna Sutton, first-year representative.

This year, more than 20 students attended the AWP conference in Washington, D.C. Almost all received a GSA travel grant, and 17 were funded by the CRW-GSA up to \$100.

This funding was a \$25 increase per student from last year, and almost triples the funding from two years before. It was also our second year securing a GSA travel grant for every student who applied for one.

Over the course of the year, the CRW-GSA raised more than \$1,200 for AWP funding and other CRW-GSA needs. This is in addition to the organization's annual operating budget of \$1,400. All of the money raised came from the bi-annual Hip & Homemade Craft Fair, founded by Alexis Finc and run this fall and spring by Whitney Ray, who was this year's CRW-GSA fundraising chair.

The CRW-GSA organized Kim Addonizio's AWP benefit reading and workshop on Feb. 10.

This year the CRW-GSA was also able to support six student readings, an MFA art show and an end-of-the-year celebration. It also helped the department protect and continue GTA parking privileges and clarify the third-year thesis timeline. It raised issues of class size and revising the thesis reading format, and members hope to continue these discussions into the next year.

Ariana Nash, CRW-GSA third-year adviser and poet Kim Addonizio

Teens Out Loud Online

by Katherine Webb

With the completion of the 2010-11 Teens Out Loud¹ production periods, participants are antsy for the next step in the program's evolution². They're ready for bigger projects and a wider reach.

For three semesters now, I've been lucky to work with the members of TOL³, creating material for a website unlike any other in the nation – a site for and by teens infected with HIV. The young adults who make up the program voluntarily meet one Saturday a month in Kenan Hall to create art with a message. The message: *This is what it's like to be born in America with HIV*. Sometimes: *This is what it's like to be young*. Sometimes: *This is what it's like to be sick*.

Always, TOL has other infected youth in mind. They could spend their Saturday's online, playing video games or sports, sleeping or doing the ever-enticing nothing. Instead, they show up and remind one another to think about what it was like before they had TOL, a group of peers who understand that which most of us never will about their shared experience with illness, mortality, stigma and alienation.

This year, the TOL-ers made journals in the Publishing Laboratory with Emily Smith, photographed the campus, wrote about their lives, painted, modeled clay, audio recorded performances and conversations, etc. They made art. They worked. In the meantime, they continued to encourage one another, forming friendships, and becoming mentors.

¹ Teens Out Loud is an outreach program sponsored by UNCW's Department of Creative Writing (Katherine Webb, instructor) and Duke Medical Center (Linda Connor, social worker).

² I'm happy to announce that Mike Bull will be taking over next year and leading the group during its fourth phase.

³ The group is made up of 14 to 19-year-olds from surrounding counties. They are students, athletes, musicians, activists and rebels. They are hilarious and brilliant.

⁴ Without treading into the ever MFA dreaded "sentimental" waters, I can say in all earnestness that I have learned a great deal about what it means to live with optimism, as opposed to self-pity, from these guys.



The Anti-Genre Reading
Photo Credit: Kiki Johnson

AN UPDATE FROM THE READING SERIES CREW

The MFA Reading Series continued this semester with several themed events. For the our first reading of the semester, in collaboration with the MFA Student Art Show, readers shared work at Bottega Gallery downtown.

Then on Feb. 25, we celebrated the cross-genre nature of UNCW's MFA program with the Anti-Genre Reading at Old Books on Front Street. Here, students read work outside the realm of their primary genre, and the MFA Program got some press when *Encore* magazine blogged about this reading to get the word out to the downtown arts community.

The Out-of-Genre Reading featured the likes of Christine Delong, John Mortara, Meagan Simmons, Rachel Richardson and Caroline Fremont. No food-goods were provided at this reading because in the state of North Carolina it's illegal to put groceries near books in a retail environment.

A staple of the MFA Reading Series for the past few years, our Absurdist Reading on April 1, held at one of Cucalorus' theaters, Jengo's Playhouse, featured multi-media and musical

performances, as well as plenty of absurdity from our readers. The Absurdist Reading delivered strangeness, oddity and verse from Nick Miller, Laura Hunsberger, Jade Benoit, Rachel Richardson, Ariana Nash and Meg Reid. It also featured a warm sack of groceries from Harris-Teeter.

Finally, the current Reading Series group retired after the spring reading, making way for a new batch of bright-eyed, goal-oriented people who are not afraid of microphones, public speaking or asking for something in return for nothing.



The Absurdist Reading Photo Credit: Kiki Johnson



DeWitt Brinson '04 completed graduate school at Louisiana State University.

Taylor Davis is enrolled in the Master of Fine Arts program in creative writing at Sarah Lawrence College.

Lia Kerner '08 and **David Dangelico '09**, who minored in creative writing, were married in Wilmington in fall 2010.

Andrea Klemm '06 and **Meredith Wrobel '07** were married in a civil ceremony in New Hampshire in October 2010.

Greg Newman '10 continues to do freelance writing and perform original music. You can hear him at www.box.net/gregnewman.

The Department of Creative Writing placed several undergraduate interns during the spring 2011 semester: **Ashley Anderson** and **Christine Stark** at the Landfall Foundation; **Andrew Browning** and **Tyler Loftis** at the Brooklyn Arts Center at St. Andrews; **Rachael Carscaddon** and **Patti Wilson** at *Encore* magazine; **Travis Lane** at *Wrightsville Beach Magazine*; **Bob Snyder** at UNCW's office of marketing and communications; and **Kim Tolleson** at *Chautauqua*, the literary magazine of Chautauqua Institution, N.Y.

WHAT'S NEW WITH *Ecotone*?

by Joanna Mulder

Ecotone joined *The New York Times Magazine*, the *Smithsonian*, *Orion*, *Discover Magazine* and *Natural History* as a winner of the John Burroughs Award for an outstanding published nature essay. The award was presented April 4 at the American Museum of Natural History to Jill Sisson Quinn for her essay "Sign Here if You Exist," which first appeared in the fall 2010 issue of *Ecotone*. The upcoming issue will feature works from Ann Beattie, Billy Collins, Alice Mattison, G.C. Waldrep, Stephanie Soileau and many others.



PROFESSIONAL TOPICS SERIES:

Hooking an Agent Panel

by Lee Armfield Cannon

On March 23, a sizable crowd gathered in Kenan Hall 1111 for the latest, pun-filled installment of the Professional Topics Series. A mixture of graduate and undergraduate students, community members, plus two prospective MFA students came together to listen to the wit, wisdom, triumphs and failures of the faculty panelists in acquiring the ever elusive agent.

Last year's panel on finding an agent proved so popular that it was a natural choice to include that topic in this year's line-up. A new group of panelists joined us: Clyde Edgerton, Philip Gerard, Rebecca Lee and moderator Robert Siegel. In the end, it felt as though other writers had joined us in spirit, since the panelists were able to share so many of the experiences of their writer friends along with their own.

The panel opened with Robert Siegel laying down the fundamentals: what is an agent and what does an agent do? The panelists began with some overlooked basics: agents work for you (even though they try to give you the impression that *you* work for *them*) and an agent pays you, you don't pay an agent.

Writers seeking representation for the first time might not be aware that there are traps out there in the publishing world in the form of "agents" who will show interest in a new writer, then demand an astronomical "reading fee" for evaluating the author's work. Beware! These agents are probably not a part of the Association of Author's Representatives, the guild that assists agents in their representation of writers and establishes a code of ethics for the industry.

After the warnings about what an agent is *not*, the panelists discussed what an agent actually is: a champion for your literary work who cultivates relationships with editors in order to find the best possible situation for publishing your work. The panelists made the distinction, though, that although an agent will represent your work on the basis of a love for it, the agent-writer relationship is essentially a business relationship, not an artistic one.

Clyde Edgerton stressed that often agents will have ideas for ways to change your work in order to make it more sellable and, while no author should dismiss an agent's suggestions, authors must ultimately trust their own instincts about whether the change is right or not.

The panel discussion then moved into how to develop a roster of agents you want to contact. Rebecca Lee shared the wisdom of reading the "acknowledgements" pages of books that are similar to the work you are shopping around. Robert

Siegel brought in the experience of his wife, fellow novelist and UNCW teacher, Karen Bender, to compare and contrast with his own. While he asked writer friends for the names of their agents – not yet realizing how agents only represent a very specialized type of work – Bender revised a section of her completed, but unsold, novel for publication in a literary journal. Siegel ended up having a confusing and unpleasant first experience with an agent, while Bender found one through the publication of her excerpt.

The moral of the story? It pays to be patient, to publish portions of your book ahead of the book itself and to make agents come to you when you're about to be published anyway.

The next crucial step is determining if a potential agent is right for you and your literary style. The panelists brainstormed a list of questions to ask a potential agent:

- Whom would you send my work to, specifically?
- How many editors will you send my work to?
- How will you describe this to editors?
- This is what I think my book is about; how does that sound?
- What do you take out of contracts to protect your authors?

Philip Gerard, echoed by the rest of the panel, stressed the importance of letting an agent know if you do not agree with their characterization of your work, but doing so as tactfully as possible.

With a laugh, Gerard recommended using the buzz-phrase, "I'm uncomfortable with..." to let an agent know he or she is slightly off-track in describing your literary work.

The concepts that arose over and over in the Hooking an Agent panel were patience and self-reliance. Answering the many questions from the audience, the panelists stressed again and again that writers need to trust their instincts and know their work in and out so they can locate an agent who will fit their needs completely. This will enable the author and agent to work as a team to successfully promote a work they both love.

FACULTY NEWS



Lavonne Adams gave a poetry reading at East Carolina University, where she was a guest in the Research for Writers

course. She also gave a reading for the American Association of University Women's annual fund-raising Authors Luncheon. She published poetry in *Big Muddy* (Southeast Missouri State University), *Cottonwood* (University of Kansas), and *Crab Creek Review*.



Clyde Edgerton's novel, *The Night Train*, due out in July, received starred reviews from *Publisher's Weekly* and *Booklist*.



Phil Furia has been doing a series of programs for WHQR called "The Great American Song Book"--sort of a musical

version of Garrison Keillor's "Writer's Almanac"--where he plays a classic version of a great pop standard (say Nat King Cole singing "Star Dust") and then talks about the song: who wrote it, how it came about, why it's endured, etc. He then plays a contemporary version of the song by artists such as Meat Loaf, Rod Stewart, Linda Ronstadt, etc. He also gave the keynote address for a seminar on "The Great American Songbook" at Hillsdale College in Michigan on March 8.



Philip Gerard served on the panel "The Future of Creative Writing in the Academy" that inspired an article in *The Chronicle of*

Higher Education. The article quoted Gerard on a lot of topics such as the creation of an MFA program, the importance of a structured and focused workshop, the benefits of UNCW's novel writing class and the program's involvement with the Wilmington community.



David Gessner is the author of two forthcoming books. *My Green Manifesto*, due out in July, tells the story of a wild ride

down the Charles River with eco planner Dan Driscoll, while *The Tarball Chronicles*, due out in September, grew out of spending last summer blogging in the Gulf of Mexico during the BP oil spill. Both books will be published by Milkweed Editions.



Sarah Messer has poems forthcoming in *The Fairytale Review*, *Salt Hill* and *Catch-Up*. She also has poems and an essay at *Common-*

Place, an online history journal from the University of Oklahoma that features (monthly) poets who use history in their work. www.commonplace.org/interim/poetry/messer.shtml

She also directs One Pause Poetry at Copper Colored Mountain Arts

in Ann Arbor, Mich. For National Poetry Month in April, they hosted three readings and conversations with poets Jerome Rothenberg, Clayton Eshleman, Monica Youn, Mark Wunderlich and Raymond McDaniel. They received a \$6,000 Michigan Council of the Arts Grant to support the series and center, which is inspired by the ideals of Black Mountain College in North Carolina. www.ccmarts.org.

Finally, Messer received a Cahill Award from UNCW and will be on research reassignment in fall 2011. She will spend her time (and Cahill Funds) working on translations of 15th century Japanese poet Ikkyu Sojun and finishing a book of essays.



Malena Mörling received a travel stipend from the Finnish Literature Exchange to travel to Helsinki, Finland, this

summer to conduct research at the Swedish Literature Society's Edith Sodergran Archive in Helsinki. This will be of great benefit for her book of translations of Edith Sodergran.



Emily Smith had two poems, "American Photograph" and "All Right," accepted for the spring 2011 special Americana

issue of the *Southern Review*. Two more of her poems, "Fields, Drifting Apart" and "One Day My Grief Up and Quit," were selected for a 2010 Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Prize.

John Jeremiah Sullivan, award-winning author and frequent instructor in the Department of Creative Writing, won a Pushcart Prize and a National Magazine Award for his essay "Mister Lytle," published in fall 2010 in *The Paris Review*.

Michael White was the winner of the first William Matthews Poetry Prize. The editors at *The Asheville Poetry Review* awarded him first prize for his poem, "The Milkmaid." He will receive \$1,000, plus publication in the next issue of *The Asheville Poetry Review* (Vol. 18, Issue 21, 2011), which will be released in November 2011. White will also be a featured reader at the Wordfest Literary Festival May 6 at the YMI Cultural Center in downtown Asheville.

White had the following works published:

- The poem "View of Delft," which won the 2010 *Florida Review* Editor's Prize, in the spring 2011 issue of *The Florida Review*.
- The essay "Bard of the Bottle" in the fall 2010 issue of *The Missouri Review*, featured on the *Utne Reader*.
- The poem "On Highland Road" in the fall 2010 issue of *Memorious*.
- The poem "Woman Holding a Balance" in the spring 2011 issue of *Image Journal*.

White's memoir excerpt "Travels in Vermeer," published in the spring 2011 issue of *The Journal*, was nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

CRW Awards

THE FOLLOWING DEPARTMENTAL HONORS WERE AWARDED IN SPRING 2011:

LAVONNE ADAMS AWARD:

Josh MacIvor-Andersen

To a graduating MFA student who, throughout his/her enrollment in the program, has shown an all-around dedication to the MFA program, his/her work and the creative writing community and has contributed to the academic and social health of the program, as well as the writing community at large.

Voted on by MFA students

ROBERT H. BYINGTON AWARD:

Nicholas Miller

Honoring the outstanding leadership and pioneering work of Robert H. Byington in establishing the creative writing program, to a second-year MFA student of outstanding creative achievement who has demonstrated unusual generosity of spirit toward faculty, staff and peers and has contributed significantly to the morale, community spirit and excellence of the MFA program.

MARGARET SHANNON MORTON FELLOWSHIP:

Michael Bull

To an MFA student at the end of the first year, for outstanding creative achievement.

OUTSTANDING FACULTY AWARD:

Clyde Edgerton

Voted on by MFA students.

UNCW BOOKSTORE AWARD 2011:

Meg Reid

UNCW EXEMPLARY POST-TENURE REVIEW 2011:

Rebecca Lee

UNCW GRADUATE TEACHING AWARD 2011:

Josh MacIvor-Andersen

UNCW STAFF EXCELLENCE AWARD 2011:

Lisa Bertini

Community Service

ALUMNI NEWS

Patricia Bjorklund '08M had the title chapter of her memoir, *U.S. and Them: A Re-enchantment of an American Childhood*, published in the *Missouri Review*, spring 2011 issue. Another chapter, "Space Race," is due in out in the *Palooka Literary Journal*. She is a full-time lecturer at Southeastern Community College in North Carolina.

Bill Carty '07M lives in Seattle and was selected for the Jack Straw Writer's Program. A podcast of one of his readings can be found at <http://jackstraw.org/blog/?p=65>. His poem "The Third" was a finalist in the 2011 Third Coast poetry contest.

Jason Frye '05M had a story "Town Center," a look into Colonial-era taverns, published in the April 2011 issue of *Our State magazine*. He has two stories forthcoming for *Our State*.

Hub-Bub writer-in-residence **Corinne Manning '10M** had a novel excerpt published in February's issue of *Drunken Boat* and an essay, "Primary Sources," in the spring 2012 issue of *Arts & Letters*.

Janie Miller '08M had a poem, "The Body of This," accepted into *Cimarron Review's* summer issue. She attended a two-week residency at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts in December 2010.

Jason Mott '08M secured a deal with *Main Street Rag* (publisher of his first book) for his superhero manuscript "...hide behind me..." It will be published later this year.

Bethany Nuckolls '08M had a short story, "Shattered," published in March in the *Toasted Cheese* online literary journal. The story won first place

in the journal's winter competition. It was also the first story Nuckolls workshopped at UNCW.

Rebecca Petruck '07M signed with children's literature agent Kate Testerman of *ktliterary*.

Sumanth Prabhaker '07M had his story "Alamo Nights" published in *Post Road*, issue 20. His publishing company, Madras Press, released its second series of titles, among which are works by Donald Barthelme, Ken Kalfus, Ben Marcus and Rick Moody.

Carmen Rodrigues '10M will have her second novel, *34 Pieces of You*, published by Simon Pulse, a young adult imprint of Simon Schuster, in fall 2012, with German rights sold at auction to CBJ Random House, publication date to be determined.

Anthony Sams '10M will have his essay "So Much for That Happy Ending: Rendering Complex Emotion in Short Fiction" appear in the forthcoming book *Dispatches from the Classroom: Graduate Students on Creative Writing Pedagogy*, to be published by Continuum Press. He is a full-time English faculty member at Ivy Tech Community College Southern Indiana. His son Judah Michael was born Nov. 27.

Cyra Sherburn '05B was a finalist in *Newport Review's* Banagrams Short Story contest with her short story "Melody and the Scientist." Her short story "Still" was a finalist in *Encore* magazine's fiction contest.

Patrick Swaney '10M was a finalist in the 2010 ABZ Poetry Prize.

Kate Sweeney '09M is writing an ode to Atlanta's velodrome for *Oxford*

American magazine's next "Best of the South" issue. She continues to co-run the city's only nonfiction reading series, "True Story!"

Daniel Terry '07M had four poems, "At the Corner of Shipyard and Independence," "Directions to My Place from Where You Are," "Home at Lunch" and "Lost," published in *Big Muddy*. His poem, "Because You Read on the Web" was published in *Naugatuck River Review*.

Brian Tucker '04B served as publisher for two local magazines, *Avenue and Bootleg*, for five years. He now is a writer for the *StarNews* and a contributor to *Performer Magazine* and *Deckfight.com*. He completed a short film titled "Would You Like to go to Winter Kills?" and is at work on a feature film called "Local Work."

Luba Zakharov '06M had an interview with Southern storyteller Lee Smith published in *Faith & Leadership*.

STUDENT NEWS

Meghan Barnes's nonfiction piece "Mad World" was nominated by *Gloom Cupboard* for a 2010 Pushcart Prize.

Claire Bateman was awarded the University of Alabama's Graduate Council Fellowship for an MFA in book arts next fall.

Michelle Bliss's essay "Fiction" was chosen for the sixth edition of *The Fourth Genre: Contemporary Writers of Creative Nonfiction*. Her essay "Our Elephant" was printed in the fall/winter 2010 issue of *Ninth Letter*. She was also named news director at WHQR.

An article about **Lee Cannon's** thesis project was published in the *Hiroshima Yomiuri News* on Feb. 4. It was about her interviews last summer with a-bomb survivors, her calligraphy teacher and how their relationship started the book that is now her thesis.

Frances Dodds was accepted to the graduate writing program at Columbia University.

Meredith Fraser's story "The Tangerine Tree" was published in the April/spring issue of the *Owen Wister Review*, the University of Wyoming's literature and art journal.

Isabel Heblich wrote "Tenets of the Painting Tribe," the introduction for the No Boundaries 2008 International Art Colony Catalogue, published by the colony and available online at www.nbiac.org.

Brian Hedgepeth was a finalist for the poetry fellowship in the Prague Summer Program.

Rochelle Amelia Hurt was awarded a

Jentel Residency for this summer. She also won the 2010 *Poetry International* Prize; the poem will appear in issue 18, next year.

Amber Lee received a 2011 Wentworth Travel Fellowship and was one of 25 seniors to be awarded the Senior Medallion from the Center for Leadership, Education and Service for outstanding involvement and leadership throughout her four years at UNCW.

Josh MacIvor-Andersen won the 2011 New Millennium Writings nonfiction award and has nonfiction published or forthcoming in *The Paris Review Daily*, *Northwest Review*, *Our State Magazine*, *Gun and Garden Magazine* and *Memoir (and)*. His essay "The Curse of Ham" was nominated by *Arts and Letters* for a 2012 Pushcart Prize.

Joanna Mulder's short story "This Will Be Our Year" won the 2011 H.E. Francis Award in Short Fiction from the Ruth Hindman Foundation. Her short story "Gary, East Side, 1997" was selected for issue 24 of *Blue Mesa Review* from the University of New Mexico.

Ariana Nash has two poems forthcoming in *Main Street Rag*, "Dear Other Woman" and "You Say You're Looking Forward to Death."

Ashley Peel was accepted to the graduate writing programs at Chatham University and the University of Idaho.

Patricia Russell received the Wentworth Scholarship and went to London during spring semester to do research on Virginia Woolf's life. She dedicates much of her success to both Keith Newlin and Janet Ellerby. Russell completed her first ebook and has two

novels that will be published post-graduation.

Jessica Thummel's short story "The Knocker" was accepted for publication in the *Owen Wister Review*.

—The—
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