Remembering Stanley Colbert

On Nov. 4, faculty, alumni, current students and friends gathered to pay tribute to Stanley Colbert, founder of the Publishing Laboratory, who passed in September. That the memorial was held in the lab itself, two rooms spacious enough to fit more than 60 attendees—many of whom remembered its closet-sized predecessor of a decade ago—is perhaps the truest testament to Stan’s vision.

Department chair Philip Gerard began by sharing a letter from David Colbert, Stan’s son. “The reporter who worked on Stan’s obituary for a Toronto newspaper asked afterward, ‘Why didn’t he write a memoir?’” David wrote. “The simple answer is that he was more interested in reading someone else’s book than writing his own. Sure, he’d tell you about Kerouac if it interested you. But it wasn’t something he thought about otherwise. The work you do here meant much more to him.”

Phil Furia, Emily Smith and Rebecca Lee followed with personal remembrances of Stan, offering a clear picture of the man, his awe-inspiring accomplishments and the tangible evidence of his legacy. To close, Michael White read from T. S. Eliot’s Four Quartets.

Guests were invited into the binding room to pick up a copy of the memorial chapbook and to the reception held downstairs in the lobby. Among the attendees were faculty from the Creative Writing, English and Film Studies departments, as well as Stan’s friends, in uniform, from the local Coast Guard Reserve. Many of those gathered were students, both graduate and undergraduate, who had never met Stan in person, but who continue to feel his influence. – Sarah Andrew

...continued on page 2
As a first-year teaching assistant in the Publishing Laboratory, I had minimally helped Stan's students with their final chapbooks and had somehow finagled an invitation to their end-of-semester unveiling.

I remember driving to his tabby house nestled among Harbor Island's hundred-year-old live oak trees. Inside, the smiles of John F. Kennedy, Jack Kerouac and Jim Henson gleamed from a collection of black and white photographs on the wall. The icons stood shoulder to shoulder with Stan. I hovered in his living room as if it were a museum. Trying to eat my slice of pizza nonchalantly, I began to take stock of what a big deal Stan Colbert was.

But that wasn't my first encounter. I met Stan my first day at UNC Wilmington. As I passed the taxidermied birds on my way to a Friday Hall science laboratory, I was sure I'd made some mistake. Portable desks, each with a relic Macintosh monitor on top, lined the lab's brick walls. A paper cutter held its ground beneath the fume hood. A plywood board covered sinks and served as a counter for the glue binder.

I didn't know then that these were training-wheel versions of the equipment used in large manufacturing facilities, but I did comprehend this much: these people were making books. I was going to make books. The Publishing Laboratory, Stan Colbert's brainchild, was just three years old at the time.

Eventually, we'd relocate to a mobile classroom in a pine stand outside of Friday, where I taught for a semester after returning as interim director in 2007. When the repairman arrived for the fourth time in as many months, he informed me that as long as I housed our equipment under a leaking roof, the machines would sputter and short. Even in that trailer, though, students found us. They came to learn publishing arts, to make books. I recognized the glint in their eyes. We offered more courses than ever, and our list of titles grew.

The department and Publishing Lab moved yet again, this time into a renovated Kenan Hall. Finally the two shared the same (thankfully, nonleaking) roof, and the lab claimed its first dedicated space, a desktop publishing suite with 17 brand-new computers and an adjacent bindery. A distinguished guest at our 2008 Writers Week, Stan joined us for an early evening party in the courtyard. He wanted a good look at the lab, of course, its lights illuminating us from the second floor. His wife, Nancy, and son, David, accompanied him.

Nobody—not the prospective students and families parading the hallways, faculty members, current students, visiting writers, donors, or administrators—has been as impressed or proud as Stan was that evening. Book jackets hang from our walls; the closet is stocked with books. On the rare occasion that the lab isn't humming with students, the screensavers flash and swirl. Seeing it through his eyes reminded me of just how innovative and exciting his vision was, and how fortunate I am—we are—to stand on his shoulders.

David e-mailed me a week later. Of his father's many accomplishments—selling Kerouac's On the Road, winning an Emmy for Fraggle Rock, serving as CEO of HarperCollins Canada, among countless others—this one, the founding of the Publishing Laboratory at UNCW, mattered most.

I can't climb the stairs without remembering Stan. Though I wasn't around for the lab's infancy, those days when it consisted of two salvaged computers in a closet, I know this: vision is having the courage to think big and to push boundaries. It is not unlike peering into a closet and seeing a publishing house.

Now in our 10th year, we've published or produced on behalf of community partners more than two dozen books. Among our greatest successes is another of Stan's ideas: the department's creative writing textbook, Show & Tell: Writers on Writing, now in its sixth edition. The lab is home to two award-winning national literary journals, Ecotone and Chautauqua. Our books are distributed to online, chain and independent bookstores around the country. In 2009, we founded a new literary imprint, Lookout Books, and will publish its first title in 2011.

Twenty-two students have graduated with a certificate in publishing. A dozen alumni work for publishing houses or in related industries, and at least one—so far—has founded his own press. Students continue to place their work in respected magazines and to publish their manuscripts with the country's best presses. Stan's legacy lives in every accomplishment.

– Emily Louise Smith
Stan was the beloved founder of the Publishing Laboratory, created with a vision to let students understand and pursue the publishing process from idea to finished book. He personally mentored scores of undergraduate and graduate students during his time at UNCW. In recognition of his achievements and his dedication to UNCW, he was awarded an honorary degree—completing an educational ambition begun at UNC Chapel Hill and interrupted by military service during World War II. He treasured his association with UNCW. A few excerpts from Stan’s remarkable biography appear below.

Stanley Colbert was a producer, director, screenwriter, publishing executive, literary agent as well as a Distinguished Visiting Professor of Creative Writing at UNCW. In 2000, Colbert established the Publishing Laboratory. As a literary agent, Colbert’s clients included Jack Kerouac and Margaret Atwood. He headed the literary department of the William Morris Agency in Hollywood, Calif., representing authors and screenwriters. As a producer, he wrote and produced films for United Artists, Twentieth Century-Fox and Columbia Pictures, as well as network television series for ABC, NBC and CBS. While working as an executive in charge of production for Ivan Tors Studios in Miami, Fla., he produced Flipper, Gentle Ben and scores of other shows. He served as executive producer of film drama for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and received an Emmy with Jim Henson for Fraggle Rock. He later became president and CEO of HarperCollins Publishers of Canada. His stories and essays have appeared in such publications as Esquire and Creative Screenwriting.

A Year of Triumphs and Loss for The Publishing Laboratory

The Publishing Laboratory, or the Pub Lab to friends, was born in 2000, brought to life by Stanley Colbert: writer, literary agent, film and television producer, director, former CEO of HarperCollins Canada, UNCW Distinguished Visiting Professor and well-loved friend of the Department of Creative Writing. The Pub Lab mourns the Sept. 21 loss of Colbert to heart and kidney failure.

Through a year of anniversaries, new beginnings and a tragic loss, the Publishing Laboratory of the UNCW Department of Creative Writing is going strong. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Pub Lab, UNCW’s own literary micropress and publishing industry teaching facility.

Colbert took the Publishing Laboratory from a vision, to a tiny closet with two computers, to a back room in Friday Hall, to the current spacious and buzzing laboratory that fills more than half of Kenan Hall’s second floor, a place where writing students can learn about the publishing industry from the inside out.

These days, the Publishing Laboratory is the place Bookbuilding and Publishing Practicum students come to learn how to use the same types of software and equipment found in large publishing houses. Emily Louise Smith and the graduate teaching assistants guide B.F.A. and M.F.A. students through the basic elements of book design, layout and publishing. In the Bookbuilding class, students complete five projects that advance their design skills. They progress from single-page, single-sided documents to chapbook-length collections of their own poetry and prose. As they print, glue-bind and trim their finished books, their smiles speak of amazement at their own accomplishments.

In the Publishing Practicum, undergraduates spend a semester designing, editing and laying out a longer collection of B.F.A. creative writing. Last year’s Publishing Practicum students created the anthology Every Free Moment, which was so well done it won the department-wide Colbert Chapbook Award, named in honor of Stanley Colbert. The award carries with it a monetary prize, but more importantly, recognition of their hard work and stellar finished product.

...continued on page 4
This semester found the Pub Lab busier than ever. Two Bookbuilding classes were offered simultaneously, instead of the usual one. A Publishing Practicum class has completed this semester’s beautiful anthology, *The Ground Stammers Back*. And regular Pub Lab work continues: producing reading posters, announcements, brochures, broadsides, press releases and publicity, most recently for the annual Writers Week that concluded on Nov. 5.

This year also marks another anniversary, that of the *Ecotone* literary journal, produced in the Publishing Laboratory. Five years ago, another vision became reality in the creative writing department as professor David Gessner and M.F.A. students Kimi Faxon Hemingway, Heather Wilson and Emily Louise Smith (who returned to become “Queen of the Pub Lab”), banded together to found *Ecotone: Reimaging Place* as a national literary journal. The new “Sex & Death” issue of *Ecotone* arrived just in time for this year’s Writers Week, which was dedicated to the celebration of the fifth anniversary of the journal. Since its birth, *Ecotone* has risen to national prominence and respect, and works that first appeared in the pages of *Ecotone* have gone on to win awards and appear again in publications such as *Best American Essays, Best American Short Stories, Best American Poetry, Best American Science and Nature Writing, New Stories from the South* and *The Pushcart Prize* anthology.

This year, to bring the legacy of Stanley Colbert home and complete the cycle of his dream, Emily L. Smith, Sarah Andrew and the other Pub Lab teaching assistants, published a limited edition chapbook of tributes to Colbert, in gratitude for all he did for the department, the Publishing Laboratory and the UNCW community as a whole. At his memorial, conducted Nov. 4 during Writers Week, those gathered to honor their friend and teacher took home copies of the chapbook produced from start to finish in the Publishing Laboratory. Colbert, founder of the Pub Lab, will be sorely missed but fondly remembered.

The year 2010 finds the Publishing Laboratory serving as the training ground for nearly twice as many students as in past years and with *Ecotone* winning more recognition than ever before. Though the father of the Pub Lab has left us, we carry his pride in the Department of Creative Writing with us as we look toward the new year.

– Lee Cannon
Winners of the B.F.A. Thesis Awards for 2009-10 were announced during the spring graduation ceremony May 8: Sarah Andrew, fiction; Talia Litteras, poetry; and Lucy Huber, creative nonfiction.

Four B.F.A. students won the Stanley Colbert award for excellence in publishing during 2009-10: Sarah Brehm,Brittany Creech, Patrick Mallory and Ben Ochoa. They were honored for their work on the spring 2010 B.F.A. anthology.

Adrienne Bender’s story “Eve of My Death” received second place in the May prose contest sponsored by Talon Magazine.

Tracie Darnell was awarded the 2010-11 N.C. Sorosis Scholarship, awarded annually to a female B.F.A. student in honor of an area writer. Darnell’s scholarship was presented in honor of writer Luleen Anderson.

Kevin Dublin ’10M was invited to be a judge at the Annual Chapbook Festival at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York and the Independent Book Festival. In addition, Dublin held two public readings of his work in April: at Barton College’s Walking into April Poetry Day, alongside poets Margaret Boothe Baddour and Michael Chitwood; and with East Carolina University professor John Hoppenthaler for the Gilbert-Chappell Distinguished Poet Series at the Northeast Regional Branch of the New Hanover County Public Library.

B.F.A. students Brad Follet, Bob Snyder and Michelle Southers assisted with Young Writers’ Week 2010, a summer camp for high school writers. The camp is sponsored by the Department of Creative Writing and is organized by students in the Master of Fine Arts Program.

Jeremy Morris has had several poems published in recent months: “Shape (with a line from Magic Man)” was published in September on the website Foundwaves; “Apple” appeared in the spring issue of Spires magazine; and “Pear” placed third in the April poetry contest for Talon Magazine. Morris also has work forthcoming in Rainy Day, an undergraduate literary magazine published at Cornell University.

Tess Malijenovsky was named 2010-11 editor-in-chief of Atlantis, UNCW’s undergraduate creative arts magazine.

Adam McClelland received the Department of Creative Writing Undergraduate Bookstore Award for 2010-11. He was also named editor-in-chief of Talon Magazine.

Rylan Morsbach played one of the lead roles in The Book of Liz, the year’s opening production for the Department of Theatre.

Lee Nance’s poetry was accepted for publication in Imagining Heaven: An Anthology of Personal Visions of Heaven. Proceeds from the book will benefit Lower Cape Fear Hospice.

Greg Newman has landed a part-time position writing profiles for the StarNews, Wilmington’s daily newspaper.

Meghan Palko was the grand prize winner of the 2010 Anthony Abbott Undergraduate Poetry Competition, sponsored by the Charlotte Writers’ Club. Her winning entry was “The Autobiography of Hurt.” Among the runners-up was Emily McCrary for her poem “Human Cartography.”

Jeff Poulsen ’07 was admitted to the Charlotte School of Law. He enrolled in August 2010.

Steven Vineis received second place in the April poetry contest sponsored by Talon Magazine. His winning entry was “My Good Year.”

Ralph Weld’s poem “Berlin to Paris and Back” was published in Roadkill Zen, vol. 3.03.

The Department of Creative Writing had several undergraduate interns during the fall 2010 semester: Ashley Anderson at the Landfall Foundation; Ruby Lisanti at the New Hanover County Public Library; Kim Tolleson at Chautauqua literary magazine; and three students at Wrightsville Beach Magazine—Adrian Gerth, Molly Grennan and Ashley Peel.

Two B.F.A. students held summer internships in 2010: Madison Kiger at Encore Magazine and Amanda Thames at Wrightsville Beach Magazine.

What’s New with Ecotone?

Ecotone’s fall “Sex & Death” issue hit the stands in mid-November, featuring work from Pulitzer Prize winners Annie Proulx and Natasha Trethewey, as well as Nick Flynn, Terry Tempest Williams and George Singleton, among others. Two stories from our spring “5th Anniversary” issue, David Means’ “The Junction” and Brad Watson’s “Alamo Plaza,” each won the O. Henry prize and will be included in next year’s volume. A big congratulations to Ron Rash who won the Frank O’Connor International Story Award for his collection Burning Bright, the title story of which appeared in Ecotone’s “Evolution” issue. – Joanna Mulder
“One of the greatest writers of the 20th century, as soon as a certain committee comes to its senses,” is how UNCW professor of English John Clifford introduced famed author Joyce Carol Oates, referring to her three nominations for the Pulitzer Prize. The prolific Oates, who has more than 50 published novels, collections of short stories, essays, poetry and books for young adults under her belt, was speaking to students at the University of North Carolina Wilmington Oct. 29.

Dressed in a striking turquoise lace top, Oates was an almost ethereal presence in the stark white classroom of Kenan Hall. Throughout her talk, her language was peppered with words like psyche, oscillates, mythical, subjective and algorithmic—all of which could be used to describe Oates’ style.

Oates was quick to dispel the notion that she grew up in a dysfunctional family—a common misinterpretation because of the compelling, emotionally intense, often morbid subject matter of her work. On the contrary, she told the students, she grew up in a happy home in the farm country of upstate New York, wanting to be a teacher.

“I was grounded in the world of books and school. Professional writing didn’t exist at the time, a writing career seemed vaporous and elusive,” she said.

Oates did indeed grow up to be both a teacher and a professional writer. A professor of humanities and creative writing at Princeton University, she said she likes teaching workshops because of the surprises that arise from various literary interpretations.

“Eleven different points of view on a single piece of work can provide a reality check the writer can’t reach alone,” she said.

In terms of writing as a career, she advises would-be authors to have a back-up plan, pointing out that Hemingway was also a journalist. Oates’ best pupil is a microbiology student whose work crosses two disciplines. She also encourages her students to step outside of writing, noting that “too much anxiety leaves no space for writing.”

Renowned **Author Joyce Carol Oates Schools UNCW Student Writers with Creative Q&A**

She said writing starts through reading. “Storytelling begins when being read to as a child, something triggers, makes one later want to contribute to that process...stories come from somewhere other than you,” she explained.

When asked about her highly anthologized short story “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?,” a work inspired by three murders committed by Charles Schmid in Arizona, Oates said she read about the incident in *Life* magazine. She was drawn to the story because it was about a serial killer at a time when the concept of serial killers didn’t exist.

“I was fascinated by the strange bond of silence—that the young protected him,” she said. She told the students she didn’t want to tell “a Germanic Death and the Maiden tale,” referring to a medieval German engraving from which she took her initial title for the story, so she wrote “an American story set in shopping malls and restaurants.”

Offering more insight to her craft, she explained that “characters don’t come from news stories. They are reports of events, the brain crafts characters. The human personality is limitless...some items need to be described once, with others the description lingers.”

Once she seriously starts writing a piece, she said she never stops and usually starts writing with the ending in mind. “It’s tough having a ‘how to finish without giving up philosophy,’” she said.

Not surprisingly, she encouraged the audience to simply write—every day. “If a bulldozer has just run you over, you can still write—even if traumatized, exhausted, the memoir can be that outlet,” she said. “One certainly can’t write an ambitious novel in that state, but there’s always a genre you can do. The work is what comes out of that state.”

Oates’ visit to the UNCW campus was part of the university’s Buckner Lecture Series and co-sponsored by the Department of English and the Department of Creative Writing. She held an afternoon Q&A session with writing students and delivered a sold-out evening lecture and book signing on Oct. 29.
Coastline interviews

with Jon Pineda

Coastline You have written a memoir, and you mentioned that you’ve begun to write fiction. Can you talk about the transition between genres?

Jon Pineda With memoir, I’ve found the struggle to represent the moment is based more in my ability (or inability) to re-inhabit the memory’s emotional space. That struggle is also there in fiction, but I feel less burdened somehow. At least, initially so. I suspect it has to do with an inherent openness that fiction offers for me, that freedom to live within various characters’ lives. Revision is a different story.

CL You said in your craft lecture that “explication can take all the power out of a poem.” And, your poetry seems to work a lot through images. How do you decide what to include/take out of your own work?

JP The poems go through numerous drafts. I read through them over and again, and each time, I’m looking for what feels essential in allowing the image to unfold simultaneously the speaker’s consciousness within that of the reader’s. I don’t always know going into each poem what will remain, but this level of engagement, however subtle, is what I strive for.

CL What general advice do you have for MFA students?

JP Read everything. And not just the work in the genre you’re studying. Read technical manuals. Learn about different cuisines. Build a boat. Allow yourself to internalize various information. It will present itself later and in surprising ways. Also, there’s patience to consider. Strengthen your relationship with patience. It will keep you writing, which is what we all want, right?

Coastline You got your M.D. and then your M.F.A. at Columbia. And now you’re teaching there. How did you first get into writing?

Rivka Galchen I “always wanted to be a writer,” but it wasn’t the kind of thing anyone in my family or anyone my family knew would do. Because I come from a super practical, levelheaded, financially scared family. So in medical school I just would look around and see that other people were devoted and passionate about what they were doing, and I knew I wasn’t and it felt really awful. And I knew I would be passionate about writing so I thought oh, ok, let’s give it a try.

CL Atmospheric Disturbances is written from the point of view of a man who believes his wife has left and been replaced by only a living likeness of herself. you spoke, in your craft lecture, about productive and unproductive mystery. Could you talk about how you decide what to include and not include in your own work?

RG I remember with Atmospheric Disturbances, I really didn’t want people to read it as trying to figure out: is he sane or is he crazy? I wanted to prepare for that as much as possible, so I had him be a psychiatrist himself, so he at least would have the tools to think it through. And I had a little hospital scene early on, which doesn’t mean that he’s not crazy, you know, I just didn’t want that to be the focus. I wanted the focus to be what it felt like to him to be him.

CL What general advice do you have for MFA students?

RG To not be upset when people criticize your work in workshop. You know, because it’s such luxurious attention, and even when people don’t like it, they’re telling you useful information, even if you don’t want to write a book that they would like. You’re still learning something about how someone might read it.
Denis Johnson is the author of many novels, most recently Nobody Move, and numerous collections of poetry, short stories and plays. He is the recipient of a Lannan Fellowship and a Whiting Writer’s Award, among many other honors for his work. For nearly 10 years, he served as the playwright-in-residence for the Campo Santo Theater Company at San Francisco’s Intersection for the Arts, where his play Psychos Never Dream premiered. Psychos Never Dream appeared in Ecotone volume 5, number 1, the “Brutality Issue.”

Rivka Galchen received her M.D. with a focus in psychiatry from Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York and her M.F.A. from Columbia University, where she was a Robert Bingham Fellow. Her novel, Atmospheric Disturbances, was published in 2008, and she has written for the Believer, Harper’s, the New Yorker, the New York Times and Scientific American. She received a Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers’ Award in 2006 and the 2010-11 Berlin Prize fellowship. She currently teaches at Columbia University. Her essay “In Between the Dream and the Doorknob: On Jonathan Lethem’s Fictions” appeared in Ecotone volume 5, number 1, the “Brutality Issue.”

Katie Fallon’s essays have been published in Isotope, the Fourth River, Fourth Genre, and River Teeth, among others. Her essay “Lost” was recently nominated for a Pushcart prize. She teaches creative writing and composition in the English departments at Virginia Tech and West Virginia University. Her essay “Ghosts in the Woodshed” appeared in Ecotone volume 2, number 1.

Charlotte Matthews is the author of two full-length collections of poetry, Still Enough to Be Dreaming and Green Stars, and two chapbooks, A Kind of Devotion and Biding Time. Her work recently has appeared in the Virginia Quarterly Review, Borderlands, Tar River Poetry and storySouth, and she received the 2007 New Writers Award from the Fellowship for Southern Writers. Matthews is a graduate of the University of Virginia and the M.F.A. Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College. She teaches in the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary and Professional Studies at the University of Virginia. Her poem “Not Telling Anything New” appeared in Ecotone volume 1, number 2.

Jon Pineda is the author of Birthmark, winner of the Crab Orchard Award Series in poetry, and The Translator’s Diary, winner of the 2007 Green Rose prize. Recipient of a Virginia Commission of the Arts Individual Artist Fellowship, he attended James Madison University and the M.F.A. program in creative writing at Virginia Commonwealth University. His work has appeared in numerous literary journals, including Crab Orchard Review, Poetry Northwest and Prairie Schooner, among others. Pineda teaches in the M.F.A. program of creative writing at Queens University of Charlotte. His poem “Ceiling and Ground” appeared in Ecotone volume 3, number 1.
Student Reading Series

The M.F.A. reading series got off to a great start with a first-year reading on Sept. 9 at Pomegranate Books. First-year readers Jade Benoit, Mike Bull, Sam Deal, Regina DiPerna, Mitch McInnis and John Mortara shared new stories and poems with colleagues and friends. October ushered all goblins and ghouls to the annual Halloween Reading where six more readers braved their way to the mic. Six seems to be the magic number this year: six readers at each reading and six-word bios.

“These brief bios trim away speaking time,” says Roderick McClain, third-year M.F.A. and member of the reading series committee. “They direct the audience to focus on the art without distraction.”

“We are looking for ways to switch things up this year,” says Joanna Mulder, another member of the committee, “An out-of-genre reading may be in the works for next semester.”

Katherine Webb and Rochelle Hurt, the other two members of the reading series crew, have been instrumental—both figuratively and literally. 

Join us at the next M.F.A. reading, and you may be welcomed by a banjo ditty and cup of hot cider.

– Joanna Mulder

Ron Rash is the author of four novels, three collections of poems, and four collections of stories, most recently Burning Bright. His poetry and fiction have been published in more than 100 journals and magazines, and he has received frequent awards and recognition for his writing, including the Appalachian Writers Association Book of the Year Award for 2003 and ForeWord magazine’s Gold Medal for Best Literary Novel of 2002, both for his debut novel, One Foot in Eden. A recipient of the O. Henry Prize, he holds the John Parris Chair in Appalachian Studies at Western Carolina University. His story “Burning Bright” appeared in Ecotone volume 4, numbers 1 & 2, the “Evolution Issue.”

Jay Varner is the author of the memoir Nothing Left to Burn and has been published in Black Warrior Review and the Georgetown Review, among others. He received his M.F.A. in creative writing at UNCW, where he served as nonfiction editor and eventually managing editor of Ecotone. Varner is currently at work on a novel and a second memoir.

Chuck Adams has worked in publishing for more than 30 years, primarily at Dell/Delacorte and Simon & Schuster. Currently at Algonquin Books, he has edited a range of both fiction and nonfiction works. Recent Algonquin titles include Water for Elephants by Sarah Gruen, Golfing with God by Roland Merullo, and Tab Hunter Confidential by Tab Hunter with Eddie Muller. Nearly 100 of the books Adams has edited have gone on to become bestsellers. He edited Jay Varner’s memoir, Nothing Left to Burn.

Peter Steinberg began his career as a filmmaker and screenwriter with a B.A. from New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts film school. He then spent 11 years as a literary agent at a number of high profile boutique literary agencies before forming his own company, The Steinberg Agency. His clients have written many bestselling books and have been nominated for/awarded Edgars, the Pulitzer Prize, the Story Prize, the Paris Review Discovery Prize, Borders Original Voices and National Book Awards.

Heather Wilson studied English and creative writing as an undergraduate at UNC Chapel Hill and received her M.F.A. in creative writing from UNCW, where she was a founding editor of Ecotone. She has worked for the North Carolina Writers’ Network and the North Carolina Literary Festival and was a manuscript editor at Houghton Mifflin Company in Boston. Currently, she writes grants for the Cameron Art Museum, does freelance editorial work for several publishing houses and writes for the Insiders’ Guide to Wilmington and North Carolina’s Southern Coast.
John Jeremiah Sullivan was the 2003 Mel and Lois Tukman Fellow with the New York Public Library’s Cullman Center for Scholars & Writers. He has been an editor at *Oxford American* magazine, *Harper’s Magazine* and *GQ*, where he currently works as a writer-at-large. His 1999 article “Feet in Smoke” was included in the 2002 Best of the Oxford American anthology, and his piece “Horseman, Pass By” (*Harper’s*, 2002) won the 2003 National Magazine Award for feature writing and the 2003 Eclipse Award for the year’s best magazine article about horse racing. It was subsequently expanded into *Blood Horses*. He is now at work on a nonfiction book about the discovery of prehistoric cave art in the southeastern United States, as well as a novel titled *The Key of the Fields*.

For Real:
A Biography of John Jeremiah Sullivan

It starts like this: John Jeremiah Sullivan comes into graduate workshop, arms full of books stacked up to his eyes, teetering. He is heavy-laden. You’d think he was acting, doing a caricature of some book-lusty professor, maybe a librarian. But he’s for real. He’s just made it to class because he’s been scouring his shelves at home, yanking down all the books that have mattered to him, that matter. And he gets to class and sort of pours them out on the tables and then starts talking excitedly about each one, arcane books, books no one has ever heard of, books about 19th-century men walking in Ireland, English poets and their true-life escapes from mental institutions. The sayings of Jesus. Custer’s last stand.

“This is nonfiction,” he says. “This is the very heart of it.”

He’s almost breathless. You’d think he was a fundamentalist quoting Scripture. Some of us are amazed he’s even here. He’s kind of a big deal. Writes and edits for the big glossies—*Harpers, GQ, New York Magazine, Oxford American*. He’s one of those rare folks who actually makes a living, full-time, with his words.

But he’s into it. Nonfiction. He believes in it. And he believes in us, this smattering of 15 graduate students gathering on Wednesdays in a small, coastal, North Carolina town, practicing.

What I’m saying is this: after class, some of the women swoon. I say, “Yeah, he’s pretty cute, I guess.” And they say, no, no, it’s the way he reads from his books.

The women—eyes all sparkly—are talking about his passion for the words, how he opens the books, fingers through them, lands on some passage and says, “Oh my God, listen to this,” and then he reads, some turn of phrase or well-crafted image, and beams.

John is from Kentucky. Sort of. He is part of the Southern diaspora who drifted away to the Northeast, to big cities and big literary circles, and eventually drifted back. But no, he’s Southern. The South has him, haunts him, maybe. *The Paris Review* just named him their first—in over 57 years of publication—Southern editor. He was written up in the local paper. Wilmington’s own. The city claims him and is proud.

John wins things: a National Magazine Award, a Book of the Year Award, a Whitening in 2004. He writes things and people say stuff like: Holy shit this is good! I’ve heard them.

He edits things (“John is one of the best editors I know,” says the *Paris Review’s* Lorin Stein to our local paper. “Few writers or editors have better judgment or a finer ear.”) He teaches with a rare and unique enthusiasm—his students swoon.

And in everything of his that I’ve read, I find this deeply embedded moral center, a kind of humility and grace and honesty that, when I teach him to my students, makes me want to tear up and say: yes, write like this. Write like this and everything will be okay.

—Josh MacIvor-Andersen
M.F.A. Involvement with WHQR Grows

With the start of the UNCW and WHQR graduate internship program four years ago, WHQR has seen the incredible talent and work ethic that M.F.A. students have to offer.

Rachel Richardson (fiction) is the operations intern at WHQR. She's enjoyed announcing the weather and trying to rid herself of her lazy Oklahoma tongue, which wants to say “Dubya HQR” rather than “double-you.” She can be heard on Thursday evenings hosting A Smooth Landing, the hippest half hour of radio around. She can also be heard sporadically stumbling over phrases like “support for programming,” “commentaries do not necessarily reflect” and “60 percent chance of showers” on the hour, between 6 p.m. and midnight.

Laura Hunsberger (nonfiction) has been very busy with the fall pledge drive, calling WHQR members to talk about their pledges of support and processing the donations that come in. She frequently hosts events, like the Fourth Friday art gallery nights. She gets to do a little bit of everything, and she's most proud of putting her graphic design interest to work by adapting the station logo for WHQR's fall campaign.

Michelle Bliss (nonfiction) is the interim news director. She works with Roderick McClain in the newsroom, making sure the small, but feisty, WHQR news team is providing up-to-date local news. This fall has been especially busy and rewarding with critical weather updates for Tropical Storm Nicole as well as coverage of this year’s midterm elections. All in all, WHQR provided in-depth interviews and stories on eight different political races across the region and state.

Roderick McClain (fiction) works in the newsroom at WHQR, which is his first taste of journalism. His most notable moment came when he interviewed basketball great, Meadowlark Lemon. Post graduation, he is eager to test the job market with his newly acquired skills. He spends his days chasing politicians, hurricanes and other disasters. The internship has supplied him with a brand new outlook on life. He hopes that someday, somewhere, somebody will hire him for something.

David Howell (poetry alum) came to WHQR after working as a copywriter with a web firm. He started at WHQR three and half years ago to help supplement his income and is now running the corporate relations department. Howell spends his days talking to local business owners in order to secure critical underwriting funds for the station. He also programs A Smooth Landing once a week. In his spare time, Howell writes and teaches part-time in the UNCW English department.

– Michelle Bliss, David Howell, Laura Hunsberger, Roderick McClain and Rachel Richardson
Lavonne J. Adams’ poems appeared in *Rarely South* (Old Dominion University), *Vermont Literary Review, Eclipse, BLIP* magazine (formerly *Mississippi Review* online) and *Yalobusha Review* (University of Mississippi). One of her poems, “Dismantling the Pearl Street Bridge,” was featured in a multi-art display during the dedication of the new Pearl Street Bridge, Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, Vt. She also gave an October reading in Charleston, S.C.

Tim Bass’ piece “On The Porch” was published in the August 2010 edition of *Our State* magazine.

Wendy Brenner’s short story “The Last Rehab,” a fictional snapshot of life in 2050, was published in *The Oxford American’s* “future” theme issue, fall 2010.

Mark Cox has a poem forthcoming in *Crazyhorse’s* 50th anniversary issue and prose in *Aspects of Robinson: Homage to Weldon Kees*. He read at Mesa State College and Suffolk University and will serve as visiting poet at Ohio University in January.

Clyde Edgerton and Mike Craver’s adaptation of Edgerton’s novel *Lunch at the Piccadilly* will play at the Shakespeare Festival in Winston-Salem Feb. 4-20. Catherine Bush’s adaptation of Edgerton’s novel *Where Trouble Sleeps* played at the Barter Theatre in Abingdon, Va., Oct. 9-Nov. 13. Danish critic Jan Nordboy Gretlund’s book *Still in Print* was published in November by the University of South Carolina Press and highlights Edgerton’s 2008 novel, *The Bible Salesman*. The USC press release says it is “an insightful guidebook to some of the best examples of modern Southern fiction, as selected by an international group of critics.” www.sc.edu/uscpress/books/2010/3944.html

Phil Furia published the book, *The Songs of Hollywood*, with co-author Laurie Patterson, with Oxford University Press in April. Both authors did an interview about the collaboration with Ben Steelman in the *StarNews*, and Furia was interviewed about the book by Terry Gross on “Fresh Air” on a show that aired in July. It has been reviewed in *Booklist, The California Literary Review* and other places. For the last few months, he has been doing a series of radio programs called “The Great American Songbook” on WHQR.


Nina de Gramont’s young adult novel *Meet Me at the River* will be published in spring 2012 by Atheneum Books for Young Readers.

This fall, Malena Morling received a Lannan Foundation Residency Fellowship to work and reside in Marfa, Texas, for five weeks, and she was awarded a Lannan Foundation Literary Fellowship.

Emily Smith was named one of 50 Best New Poets by guest editor Claudia Emerson. Her poem “After Reading About How to Attract Martins to Gourd Houses” appeared in the anthology *Best New Poets* from the University of Virginia Press in November. She was also selected for a two-week summer residency at the Virginia Center for the Studio Arts in Amherst. www.vcca.com

John Jeremiah Sullivan was named the first Southern editor for *The Paris Review*. He also received a mention for his evocative *Paris Review* piece on Southern writer Andrew Lytle. maudnewton.com/blog


His essay “Bard of the Bottle,” about the tragic life and death of the poet Thomas McAfee, appeared in the prestigious *Missouri Review* (www.missourireview.org). Three chapters of his memoir *Travels in Vermeer* will appear this fall as excerpts in *The Journal*, the literary magazine of The Ohio State University (english.osu.edu/research/journals/thejournal). His villanelle “On Highland Road” will appear this fall in the online journal *Memorious* (www.memorious.org). His poem “Woman Holding a Balance” will appear this winter in the print edition of *Image: Art, Faith, Mystery* (www.imagejournal.org). He was a featured presenter at East Carolina University’s seventh annual Literary Homecoming, Sept. 17-19 (www.ecu.edu/lithomecoming/). He is scheduled to read March 14 in the Distinguished Writers Series at the University of Missouri (creatwritng.missouri.edu/CWPReadings.html).
ALUMNI NEWS

Hannah Dela Cruz Abrams ’02, now full-time lecturer with the UNCW English department, received a national $25,000 Rona Jaffe Foundation Writer’s Award.

Kate Cumiskey ’06M published two poems in Verse Wisconsin. Her book Surfing in Smyrna Beach was released.

Far Beyond the Pale, a novel by Daren Dean ’03M is now available on Amazon (www.amazon.com/Far-Beyond-Pale-Daren-Dean/dp/1453754466/ref=sr_1_1?r=1&s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1284133183&sr=1-1).

“Rebecca to Isaac,” a poem by Will Flowers ’10M, was accepted for publication in A Face to Meet the Faces: An Anthology of Contemporary Persona Poetry.

“Romantic Comedy,” a story by Lukis Kauffman ’09M was featured in Vol. 22, No. 2 (spring 2010) of Other Voices.

Brad Land ’02M had a piece featured in Oxford American’s 2010 Best of the South.

Robert Lurie ’05M is now writing for Blurt Magazine.

Corinne Manning ’10M was selected to be the 2010-11 Writer-in-Residence for the Hub City Writers Project in Spartanburg, S.C.

Amelia Morris ’09M was featured on National Public Radio’s The Splendid Table on Sept. 25 for her food blog Bon Appétempt, which has been getting rave reviews.

Rebecca Petruck ’07M won first place in the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators Writing Contest for her middle grade novel Blue Moo, which was her thesis in the M.F.A. program.

“The boy in the garden puts the blade,” a poem by Anthony Sams ’10M, was published in the New York Quarterly. His poem “Waiting for Whales” was accepted for publication in Plain Spoke. Sams teaches English at Ivy Tech Community College in Indiana.

Kiki Vera Johnson edited and designed the Life is Short Trilogy by Ann Ipock, which hit stores in November.

Josh MacIvor-Andersen was awarded first place from the Evangelical Press Association for his reporting on a community development organization in Atlanta. He has nonfiction forthcoming in Gulf Coast and is expecting a baby with his wife Kathryn.

Heather McIntyre’s band toured with Amy Ray of the Indigo Girls in the fall.

Ashley Anderson, B.F.A. had a poem, “Wake,” accepted for the inaugural issue of the literary magazine Catfish Creek.

Meghan Barnes’ poem “You and I: My Little Kudzu” will be featured in the next issue of Gloom Cupboard – Literature for the Common People, an online magazine to which Barnes has also been appointed co-editor (gloomcupboard.com/about). Her essay “Fighting Fate, For the Flames” was picked up by the online journal Thoreau’s Rooster.

Kirk Barrett, B.F.A. received a 2010 Wentworth Travel Fellowship and the 2010-11 Louise Jackson Green Scholarship. While traveling in the Balkans this summer, he was invited to be a guest lecturer at the International School in Belgrade. In November, he presented a paper at the Streamlines Literary Conference “The Atrocity Exhibit: The Liminal Borderlands of History and Fiction.” It featured fiction and non-fiction based directly on stories from participants and refugees of the Bosnian War.

Waxwings, a new chapbook by Daniel Terry ’07M, is available from Seven Kitchens Press. One of his poems appeared in Rick Magazine. “The Winter Garden” was in the October/November issue of Horticulture Magazine, “For All of Its Windows” was published in Poet Lore and “The Deer” was published in Undefined.

Nothing Left to Burn, a book by Jay Varner ’07M, hit the shelves on Sept. 21.

Human Resources, the first book of poems by Jesse Waters ’98M, will be released by Inkbrush Press in December 2010.

student news

Erin Sroka’s ode to her bingo hall appeared in Oxford American’s 2010 Best of the South.

Katherine Webb’s poem “The Static Electricity of Playground Equipment” was picked up by poemmemoirstory. pms-journal.org