First major gift during Holden Thorp’s chancellorship to support UNC’s Creative Writing Program

The first major private gift made during Holden Thorp’s tenure as chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill will enable creative writing students to study with some of the nation’s most notable writers.

Made July 1, 2008, the first day of Thorp’s administration, the gift from Sallie Shuping-Russell of Chapel Hill will fund an innovative new course featuring the work of active writers who will hold a distinguished visiting professorship within the Creative Writing Program.

The $666,000 gift qualifies for a $334,000 grant from the North Carolina Distinguished Professors Endowment Trust, bringing its total value to $1 million. The state fund, established in 1985 by the N.C. General Assembly, provides matching grants to recruit and retain outstanding faculty.

The gift will create the Sallie Shuping-Russell Distinguished Visiting Professorship. Starting in the fall of 2009, four outstanding writers will come to campus to participate in the regularly scheduled course, “Living Writers,” which will honor her mother, Margaret R. Shuping, who graduated from UNC in 1944 with a degree in journalism. The visiting professors also will give public readings for the University community.

“My career has been spent financing new technologies,” Shuping-Russell said. “However, as science rolls forward, I want to make sure we don’t lose sight of the human experience of dealing with life in these times. That is what literature does best. With this professorship, I hope to inspire the next generation of writers to embrace that purpose.”

Shuping-Russell, managing director at the investment firm BlackRock in New York, N.Y., is a member of the UNC Board of Trustees and the UNC Foundation Investment Fund Co. Board of Directors, and is a former member of the Board of Directors of UNC Health Care. She earned a bachelor’s degree in English and political science at Carolina in 1977 and holds a master’s in business administration from Columbia University.

“This gift gets my job as chancellor off to a great start, and I’ll always feel a special gratitude to Sallie,” Thorp said. “The rigorous program and intimate engagement with faculty in creative writing embody the commitments to originality and undergraduate experience that define Carolina. Sallie’s gift shows not only her extraordinary generosity, but also her understanding of our deepest values.”

The “Living Writers” course will be the Creative Writing Program’s first and only semester-length class arranged entirely around a series of visiting writers and their works, making it “a model for the study and practice of contemporary literature,” said Michael McFee, director of creative writing at Carolina.

“This kind of close contact with authors, especially when students are familiar with their work, gives young writers the chance to have extended conversations with those practicing the art and craft to which they aspire,” McFee said.

The course also will further UNCs overall mission to give students a liberal arts education, Shuping-Russell said.

“The Creative Writing Program at Carolina is unique in its focus within undergraduate studies,” she said. “It allows the University to be a leader in interpreting the human condition as other parts of the institution unfold the genetic structure of our being.

“With today’s rapid scientific discovery, our literary capacity has to maintain its pace. It is my hope that this gift will help secure this important mission for Carolina.”

Shuping-Russell’s gift builds on several other private-fund programs in creative writing at Carolina. These include the Thomas Wolfe Scholarship, the Blanche Britt Armfield Poetry Series, the Morgan Writer-in-Residence Program, the Doris Betts Distinguished Professorship and other resources that have enabled the Creative Writing Program to bring a wide range of writers to campus to interact with undergraduate students and the community.

“We in creative writing are extraordinarily grateful to Sallie Shuping-Russell,” McFee said. “This is a terrific opportunity for us and for Carolina.”

Chapter and Verse
NEWSLETTER OF THE CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM AT UNC CHAPEL HILL

In this issue
An interview with Michael McFee, Faculty and Alumni News, Prize-Winning Authors and More!

Chapter and Verse
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Daniel Wallace, Editor
UNC Chapel Hill
Greenlaw Hall, CB#2-3520
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3520
C&V@unc.edu
http://english.unc.edu/creative
Phone 919.962.4000
Fax 919.962.3520
During Carolina's 2007-08 academic year, Creative Writing at Carolina enjoyed another terrific year, offering 28 classes of prose (fiction, nonfiction, children's literature, stylistics, and playwriting) and 19 of poetry and serving 734 UNC undergraduates—a record number! In 2008-09 we will once again offer over 40 innovative classes in imaginative writing.

Abiding, powerful support for the program is a marvel, and it comes from our way of speaking from our students, our faculty and staff, and from all across campus—from former Department of English and Comparative Literature Chair James Thompson and the department's administrative board, from our many friends and counselors in South Building, particularly former college of Arts and Sciences Dean, and now Chancellor, Holden Thorp, Senior Associate Dean William Andrews, Director of Communications Dee Reid and Assistant Director of Communications Kim Spurr, and from Executive Director Jamie May, Associate Director Rob Parker, Associate Director of Capital Gifts Margaret V. Costley, and all the terrific staff of the Arts and Sciences Foundation.

Last year, the Morgan Writer-in-Residence Program brought us National Book Award winner Alice McDermott, who riveted a large Hill Hall audience with a reading of her new short story, "Our Girls," on February 26. Ms. McDermott (Richard A. Macksey Professor at Johns Hopkins University) enjoyed a beginning with our Creative Writing students in the Anne Queen Faculty Commons in the YMCA, met the press, conducted a class with creative-writing students of Amy Kostrewa (99') at Cedar Ridge High School, Hillsborough, and participated in a panel discussion entitled "Fiction and Religion" with novelist and English and Creative Writing Professor emerita Doris Betts and Professor of Religious Studies Ruel Tyson. Alice McDermott met with our classes and small groups of students on numerous occasions, and was greatly admired and enjoyed by all. We again thank the Carolina alumni Allen (65) and Musette (76) Morgan, whose support started this much-appreciated program fifteen years ago. Every year, the entire University community looks forward to Morgan week, directed by Susan Irons (M.A. '79, Ph.D. '01) as a premier rite of Chapel Hill's spring.

Other key private funds supporting our activities include the Rankin Faculty Support Fund, established by Alex Rankin ('77), the Burns Fund, established by Ann Williams Burrus ('52), the Froelich Family Fund, recently established to help increase our lecturers' stipends by Henry ('91) and Molly Froelich of Charlotte, and our Gift Fund. The brand new Walker Percy Fund, an endowment helping underwrite our lecturers, was set in motion two years ago by Frank Borden Hanes, Sr. ('42). The Robert Rarick Award, for student nonfiction writing about North Carolina's natural world, receives support from the Ruark Society of Chapel Hill, led by retired attorney and author James T. Cheatham III ('57, L.L.B., 61 LL.B.).

Our Armfield Poets last year were Gregory Orr of the University of Virginia, who came to Carolina in October, and Pulitzer Prize-winner and University of Mary Washington Professor Claudia Emerson (a former student of Kenan Professor Alan Shapiro), who read in April. Both were sponsored by the Armfield Fund for Poetry (a bequest to us from the late poet Blanche Britt Armfield) 28 MA.

The support of James Kenan III ('68) has given us the Kenan Visiting Writer Program, and last year our eighth Kenan was Joni Tevis, a University of Houston Ph.D. whose first book, The Wet Collection, was published in November, as well as readings by University of Mary Washington's Warren Rochelle ('77) and Swarthmore College's director of Creative Writing, poet Nathalie Anderson.

The Thomas Wolfe (20) Award and Medal, made possible by University friend and benefactor Ben Jones III ('30) as part of the annual lecture series established by the Thomas Wolfe Society, was presented October 1, 2007 (Wolfe's 107th birthday), to the renowned author Reynolds Price. Mr. Price delivered the Wolfe Lecture to a packed and overflowing Carroll Hall auditorium, and he was touched by both the attendance and the crowds obvious affection and esteem for him. Another packed house—this time overflowing the 140-seat Pleasants Family Assembly Room in Wilson Library—cheered Marianne Gingher's and Daphne Athas's Stylistics class's December 2007 performance, Spockety-Yee! Several members of the class carried a shortened version of the show to student audiences at Chapel Hill High School and N.C. School of Science and Math (Durham).
Naimal Huq '08 edited a video of the main December '07 show and helped Professor Gangher establish a website for Stylistics. Daphne Atha's stylistics book (soon to be, edited by Marianne Gangher and with illustrations by Daniel Wallace), was published in the fall of 2007, making available Professor Atha's decades of experience studying and experimenting with the extremely fine points of language.

The Thomas Wolfe Scholarship, founded in 2001 by author and philanthropist Frank Borden Hanes, Sr., of Winston-Salem, held its seventh national competition last school year. Its reading committee members again were Rebecca Morphis '01 MA, Tara Powell '04 PhD, and Courtney Jones '01 BA, and its four board of advisor members were Ben Distel,按时 Professor of English and Creative Writing Pam Durban, prize-winning novelist David Payne '77, and Professor and Scholarship co-director Bland Simpson '73, with fellow Creative Writing teacher Lawrence Naumoff '68 standing in for Scholarship co-director Marianne Gingher, who was on leave. We appreciate the ongoing counsel and help we receive from Morehead Foundation officers Charles Lovelace '77 and Megan Mazocchi '82. As we say congratulations and a fond farewell to our third Wolfe Scholar, Andrew Chan '08, we announce with pleasure that our seventh Thomas Wolfe Scholar—Jenna Hall of China Grove, N.C.—entered Carolina’s Class of 2012. The current Scholars Kendra Fish '09, Nate Lumpkin '10, Marie Devlin '11, and Denise Rickman '11. In addition to the Wolfe Scholarship, we are fortunate in being able to offer the Wanda Chappell Scholarship, held during '07-08 by Travis Smith.

A all of our readings, events, and competitions display the depth of our curricular and extra-curricular activities, for which we again express our thanks to the Creative Writing Program’s friends near and far, whose generosity makes it all possible. Our school-within-a-school truly is a jewel, and all of us—students, faculty, staff, alumni—strive to continue making Creative Writing at Carolina the very best undergraduate writing education available in America.

All of our Creative Writing faculty members are dedicated teachers who are also deeply involved in their own creative work, and they are well known for their passionate engagement with North Carolina and the nation. Please see the detailed individual entries on the activities of our faculty, which appear later in this newsletter: Daphne Atha’s, Michael Chitwood’s, Pam Durban’s, Marianne Gingher’s, Scott Huler’s, Randall Kenan’s, Michael McFee’s, Wilmer Mills’s, Ruth Moose’s, Lawrence Naumoff’s, Nina Riggs’s, James Seay’s, Dave Shaw’s, Alan Shapiro’s, Bland Simpson’s, Joni Tevis’s, and Daniel Wallace’s.

We appreciate contributions from alumni and friends of Creative Writing at Carolina to our Doris Betts/Jessie Rehder Creative Writing Fund and to our Max Steele Fund, established to honor these great author-teachers and intended to support through innovations and enhancements the continued vitality of the Program: Interested parties may contact: Mr. James May, The Arts & Sciences Foundation, CB# 6115, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27599.

As of summer 2008, Creative Writing at Carolina is led by the inspired and inspiring Professor Michael McFee (76, M.A. ’78), veteran award-winning teacher, celebrated poet, and champion of North Carolina’s ongoing literary renaissance, a man whose devotion to our students, faculty, program and University is both legendary and boundless. I gladly salute and thank Betts Distinguished Professor Pam Durban, my friend and colleague who stood in most ably as Acting Director of the program while I was serving as Acting Chair of our department this spring, to her and her leadership go much of the credit for a great finish to a grand year.

I deeply thank all of you—most especially my wife and collaborator Ann Cary Simpson (78)—who have made these past six years so eventful and successful for Creative Writing at Carolina, whose banner I have loved carrying all over the great state of North Carolina and well beyond. How it fell to me to lead for a spell this extraordinary troupe will always be one of the sweet mysteries of my life. What a marvel it is to be among such wonderful spirits, and to bear witness as they all sprout wings and fly.

—Bland Simpson

Director, Creative Writing at Carolina [2002-2008]
An Interview with Michael McFee
New Director of Creative Writing at Carolina

C&V: Congratulations, Michael, on becoming Director of Creative Writing at Carolina, only the 6th one since the program’s inception in 1947.

MM: Well, thank you—I am thrilled to follow in such distinguished footsteps, and never dreamed I would.

C&V: And you’re the first director who is an alumnus of the program—any special recollections from your days as a Creative Writing student?

MM: (Laughs) When I was a long-haired, flannel-shirt-wearing, dirt-poor hillbilly poet, I never would have dreamed that I would become a professor in the program and department that shaped me. When I was an undergraduate, I’m not sure that it really was a “program” in the current sense, we did have the fiction and poetry tracks, but advancement in the sequence was nowhere near as competitive or professional as it is now. Our senior honors poetry class, taught by Robert Kirkpatrick, met in the parlor at the Chapel of the Cross, where we drank wine and smoked and sometimes worked on poetry. I took in a long poem written on a roll of toilet paper and it’s one of the few times I ever saw Robert speechless—though not for long.

C&V: You’ve assumed this office at a difficult time for all institutions, a time of tightening budgets and funding cuts.

MM: True, but in recent years Creative Writing has benefited from the generosity of its donors and the attention of the College of Arts & Sciences to such a degree that we probably feel the pinch less severely than most, and we plan to continue doing what we do well and refining our curriculum.

C&V: Creative Writing’s faculty, student numbers and breadth of course offerings make it larger, really, than a department that shaped me.

MM: We know that some schools do that, including UNC Wilmington, and, as a highly-articulated program, we are giving it every opportunity to develop courses that draw upon our interests and professional strengths—for example, Alan Shapiro has offered a course in poetic imitation, and Randall Kenan will teach a fiction class this fall. I feel extraordinarily lucky to be working with such an accomplished, congenial and dedicated group of writers and teachers. The previous directors of the program have worked so hard and so imaginatively that my job is a joy—I don’t have to worry about funding for teachers and courses as directors Max Steele or Jim Seay did. I am very wwww.

C&V: What about offering a B.A. and/or B.F.A. degree?

MM: We have discussed this, but for now are very happy in our English & Comparative Literature departmental home, and appreciate how our location reinforces the essential bond between writing and reading.

C&V: When I was a long-haired, flannel-shirt-wearing, dirt-poor hillbilly poet, I never would have dreamed that I would become a professor in the program and department that shaped me.

C&V: The Shuping Living Writers course, announced on your first day as director, is quite something—it’s launch is planned for Fall 2009.

MM: Yes, Sallie’s phenomenally generous gift makes possible a one-of-a-kind course. It will put our writing students in contact with some of the country’s finest writers, who will come to campus and work with them both in- and outside of class.

C&V: What else do you foresee the program’s doing during your time as director?

MM: With the encouragement of my predecessors Bland Simpson and Marianne C. G. McKee, and others, we plan to expand the offerings in creative non-fiction, moving towards an honors class in that genre as well. I also want to give our teachers opportunities to develop courses that draw upon their interests and professional strengths—for example, Alan Shapiro has offered a course in poetic imitation, and Randall Kenan will teach a fiction class this fall.

I feel extraordinarily lucky to be working with such an accomplished, congenial and dedicated group of writers and teachers. The previous directors of the program have worked so hard and so imaginatively that my job is a joy—I don’t have to worry about funding for teachers and courses as directors Max Steele or Jim Seay did. I am very grateful to be able to devote my energy to larger questions of where the program is going and what else it should be doing.

Michael Chitwood and Daniel Wallace have won 2008 North Carolina Book Awards for poetry and fiction.

Chitwood received the Roanoke-Chowan Award for Poetry for Stall (Tupelo Press, 2007), his sixth collection of poems. Carolina faculty have won the Roanoke-Chowan award six times out of the past nine years. It’s the second Roanoke-Chowan Award for Chitwood; he won in 2003 for Gospel Road Going (Tryon Publishing, 2002).

Wallace, the J. Ross Macdonald Professor of English and Creative Writing, received the Sir Walter Raleigh Award for Fiction for Mr. Sebastian and The Negro Magician (Doubleday, 2007).

Chitwood’s Stall was also named as a 2008 finalist for ForeWord Magazine’s poetry book of the year. In addition to his six books of poetry, which include Gospel Road Going and The Shuping Living Writers course, announced on your first day as director, is quite something—it’s launch is planned for Fall 2009.

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ODe to the road

On a ranked list of Best Reasons Ever to Take a Vacation, "Poetry Road Trip" has to be somewhere at the top. This September, that's exactly what five other poets and I from the Senior Honors class were able to do—with the help of the Blanche Armfield Fund for Poetry. We set out for the Dodge Poetry Festival in Stanhope, New Jersey, early on the morning of the 25th. On the way, someone in our group noticed that we were riding in a Dodge van. Clearly, the weekend was destined to be full of poetic resonance.

Called "Wordstock" by some, the Dodge gathers more than sixty poets for three days of readings, craft discussions and panels. Though big-name poets like Robert Hass and Sharon Olds didn't disappoint, the festival was just as valuable for introducing us to poets we'd never heard of before. What to make of Joy Harjo's chanting and saxophone playing during her reading? Was Brenda Hillman's work inscrutable, or worth buying at the Borders book tent? How much longer can Chris Abani maintain his civility in a panel with the decidedly uncivil Franz Wright? With readings going on simultaneously in five different tents, all day, the Dodge outdid us. It also challenged and expanded our ideas of what poetry can be—exactly what writers our age need. I hope it can become a tradition for future Honors classes.

—Travis Smith

Jenna Hall

on the Thomas Wolfe Scholarship

I discovered Thomas Wolfe after I found out I was in the finals for his scholarship. I thought it might be an integral part of the interview, explaining to the comparative literature department why my love of Thomas Wolfe made me the quintessential Carolina Girl. I went to the library and picked out the most nondescript, worn copy of Look Homeward, Angel in stock and left to practice looking scholarly and ascetic on a park bench. Thomas Wolfe, incidentally, never came up during my scholarship interview. I know that's just as well, because now I can't remember anything about what I had planned to say about his cataloguing technique and the way he had captured the expanse of the human experience. I do remember, I really liked the parts about the food.

Wilmer Mills

on the Kenan Visiting Writer Program

Having the Kenan Visiting Writer position has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life, combining a great honor with time and funds to pursue my writing in an intensive manner. My being here in this capacity has also coincided with a period in my life when I have some big projects, especially completing what I hope will be my second book. The Kenan Fellowship has also helped me hone my teaching skills, something I really needed to do. In addition to all of this, my life has been greatly enriched by the wonderful other writers in the program at UNC. I know that in the future I will remember my two years here as the breakthrough period in my life and work.

Dodge Poetry

Kenan Visiting Writer

Ode to the Road

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Dodge Poetry

Kenan Visiting Writer
Daphne Athas has poems appearing in the online magazine Oystir Bay, and a short story in the forthcoming Long Story Short: Flash Fiction by Sixty-Five of North Carolina’s Finest Writers. Her manevick grammar textbook, Gram-O-Rama, Breaking the Rules, edited by Marianne Ginhger, was published last year by iUniverse and has been adopted for mini-courses in grammar by the NC School of Science and Math. She spent the summer in Greece in Athens, Pylos, and Paleohora, Crete, making a special trip to explore and research Chios, reputed birthplace of Homer, Onassis, Naxhous, and other breakers-of-rules, brigands, pirates, outlaws and story-tellers two miles across the Mediterranean from the coast of Turkey.

Laurence Avery located two audio tapes several years apart of Paul Green telling a fine humorous story he never published: using elements from both versions, he made a story that will appear in 2009 in Our State as “Paul Green’s Insurance Story.” Laurence’s own recent poems have been stimulated by his Cherokee ancestry, and three of those are forthcoming in the North Carolina Literary Review.

Doris Betts, Alumnus Distinguished Professor Emerita, received the George Garrett award from Associated Writing Programs, the Laurel Award from Friends of Greensboro Library, and a literary award from Friends of the Library at ECU. Her story “Another Modern Proposal” appeared in Conjunctions, and another, “The Oil Who Wanted to Be a Horse,” is forthcoming in Long Story Short: Flash Fiction by Sixty-Five of North Carolina’s Finest Writers. She joined the Creative Writing program in the fall of 2008 as the Ann Williams Burrus Visiting Writer. Much as Max Steele did in the fall of 2002, she met with a number of ongoing workshop classes over the course of the term.

Michael Chitwood’s Syll was a finalist for Fawcett Magazines’s best poetry book of the year award and won the 2008 Roanoke-Chowan Award. His work has recently appeared or is forthcoming in The New Republic, Poetry, Slate, TriQuarterly, Image, Carolina Quarterly, Southwest Review, Cincinnati Review, Threepenny Review and ABZ.

Pam Durban’s short story “The Jap Room” received the 2008 Goodheart Prize in Fiction. This award is given to the best story published in Shunnahdah magazine during the year. For the second time in the last four years, the Honors Program at Meredith College chose her novel So Far Back as required reading. She served as UNCC’s Acting Director of Creative Writing during the spring semester, 2008.

Marianne Ginhger’s new book, Adventures in Pin Land, published fall 2008 and illustrated by Daniel Wallace, is a comic memoir about her writing life from age six until she published her first book. She is editing Long Story Short: Flash Fiction by Sixty-Five of North Carolina’s Finest Writers. Recent other adventures included a trip to Zambia last summer to visit her son, a Peace Corps volunteer.

Randall Kenan’s short story “Ain’t No Sunshine,” appeared in the Summer/Fall 08 issue of Black Renaissance/black Natu (NYU). He contributed the North Carolina essay to the anthology State by State: A Panorama Portrait of America (Ecco). For the summer of 2008 he was on the faculty of the Sewanee Writers’ Conference and the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference, and over the past year he has given readings and lectures in Alabama, New Jersey, Minnesota and South Carolina.

Michael McFee enjoyed a Kenan Leave in fall 2007 and a Cramer Fellowship at the Institute for the Arts and Humanities in spring 2008, during which time he worked on new poems and essays and published work in such places as The Threepenny Review, The New Republic, and Cambrerd Nation. The Best of Southern Food Writing 3. In April of 2009 he will be presented with the James Still Award for Writing about the Appalachian South by the Fellowship of Southern Writers at their biennial Conference on Southern Literature in Chattanooga.

Wilmer Mills, the Kenan Visiting Writer, has poems recently published by The Oxford American, The Southern Review, and Shunnahdah, and forthcoming from First Things, Modern Age, and Literary Imagination. He will also be included in an anthology, The Swallow Anthology of New American Poets (University of Ohio).


Nina Riggs’s chapbook of poems, Lucky, Lucky, has just been published by Finishing Line Press.

Alan Shapiro published his ninth collection of poetry, Old War, with Houghton Mifflin.

Joni Tevis’s book of lyric essays, The Wo Collection, was published by Milkweed Editions in August 2007. It is now a finalist for the Minnesota Book Award, the Orion Book Award, and the Oshana Book Award. ‘I’ve really enjoyed my time as the Kenan Visiting Writer—smart students, generous colleagues, and the best library I’ve ever worked in! In the fall, I’ll start a tenure-track teaching job in the English Department at Furman University, a small liberal arts college in Greenville, SC. I credit my time at UNC-Chapel Hill with securing that job!’

James Seay’s poetry was presented in the 15th Anniversary Celebration of the Southern Writers in Performance Series at UNC-Chapel Hill. His poem “Mountains by Moonlight” was included in Literary Trails of the North Carolina Mountains, published by UNC Press.

Bland Simpson served as acting chair of the Department of English and Comparative Literature (spring ’08) and completed six years’ service as director of the Creative Writing Program. He contributed the essays ‘How the West Won Us’ to Novello Press’ anthology Making Notes: Music of the Carolina (Spring ’08) and ‘The World Kaufst Made’ to North Carolina Literary Review (Summer ’08). He toured extensively throughout the state, both as a writer and a musician, performing as a Red Clay Rambler in shows with the Carolina Ballet and North Carolina Symphony, and as a Coastal Cabinat at Restore America’s Estuaries national conference in Providence, RI. He is on the editorial board of UNC Chapel Hill Center for the Study of the American South’s magazine Southern Colonies.

Daniel Wallace’s work has recently appeared in Nine Stories from the South, Fire Pieces, Gardens and Grass and Book, and is forthcoming in The River Ruins. In 2008 his novel Mr. Segovia and The Ngor Magician was released in paperback and was awarded the Sir Walter Raleigh Award for fiction. Three books were published in 2008 featuring his illustrations: Pup Talks, Warnings, and Screeds: Indispensable Wisdom and Cautionary Advice for Writers, by George Singleton, Adventures in Pee Land: Our Writer’s Journey from Inklings to folk, by Marianne Ginhger, and A State of Lamplight, a collection of humorous stories by Alabama writers. He is the J. Ross MacDonald Distinguished Professor of English.
Rebecca Morphis is the managing editor of NC State University’s alumni magazine, NC State. Her article in that magazine, “Building a Branch on the Tree of Life,” won the award for science writing. She’s also working on a project with a friend, a cookbook for new moms with the working title ‘Sippynini: A Fun Mom’s Guide to Spillproof Entertaining’ (it’s a tongue-in-cheek guide with cocktails and recipes) to having a life when you’re a slave to the two-and-under set. They hope to finish the proposal in the next few months, children permitting.

Anna Peepers has returned from living in the UK for 7 years. She has been seeking her vocation, recently beginning work as a teaching assistant in 1st grade, and hopes to return to school for a Master’s in teaching at the Elementary level.


Ross White is the editor of Indy, the magazine of short poetry and microliterature, and the publisher of Ball City Press (http://ballcitypress.com). He taught poetry in the Creative Writing Program at Carolina in 2006-2007. He lives in Durham, NC. His work has appeared in Tar Rope Poetry, Carolina Quarterly, and New England Review, and most recently in Poetry Daily.

Chris Barge worked until recently as a newspaper reporter covering politics for the Rocky Mountain News in Denver. Currently he works as the development director at The Community Foundation serving Boulder County. He lives in Boulder with his wife Erin, and their daughter Ellery.

Stephen Brower works in music marketing and A&R at Vanguard Records, and has signed artists such as Greg Laswell, The Watson Twins, Camper Van Beethoven, and Nellie McKay. He also writes a film blog at pocketcinemephile.com, where his annual year-end lists have been excerpted by pocketcinephile.com, where his annual year-end lists have been excerpted by

Laura Emerson is currently the literary chair on the Pacific Grove Cultural Arts Commission, and in that capacity is actively working with a committee of dedicated citizens to organize the City’s first annual cultural/literary festival.

Phillip Locey has recently moved to Lexington, KY, and is roughly halfway done with his first book, a fantasy novel he is hoping to finish sometime in the spring.

Sheryl Mebane continues to write both poetry and fiction, and is a member of various musical groups, in which she sings and plays drums. She began her post doctorate in Environmental Science in 2009.

Leighann Swanson is a stay-at-home mom to Natalie, who will be 1 in January. She lives in Charlotte.

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Kate Harrison has been working in children’s publishing in New York ever since graduating. After 8 years of editing at Harcourt Children’s Books, she is now a senior editor at Dial Books for Young Readers.

Daryl L. Houston lives in Knoxville, Tennessee. He has two wonderful children and works creating a web browser for a company in California. He has ambitions of becoming a gentleman farmer, or, failing that, at least a gentleman gardener. Towards that end, he is growing potatoes in trash cans on planks spanning an unused tub in his master bathroom.

Renee Wolcott is back in school yet again to study literature from an entirely new angle: not as a writer or editor but as a book conservator. She was admitted to the 2011 graduate class of the Winterthur-University of Delaware master’s program in art conservation, and hopes to spend the summer of 2009 studying traditional bookbinding in the Czech Republic.

Matthew Vollmer: first book, a collection of stories titled Future Missionaries of America, will be published this year by McAdam Cage. The stories in this collection have appeared in such magazines as Paris Review, Virginia Quarterly Review (2008), The House, and a number of others. He has twice been short-listed for Best American Short Stories and nominated on numerous occasions for the Pushcart Prize. Currently, he lives with his wife and son in Blacksburg, VA, where he teaches in the English Department at Virginia Tech.

Culley Holderfield is living in Durham with his wife, Jodi Lasetter (’96 BA Anthropology, Women’s Studies), working at Self-Help Credit Union, and fighting the good fight for social justice. He continues to write as well. After completing a rough draft of a memoir of his travels in Africa and Europe, he returned to his long-ago set-aside first novel. After 15 years and ten drafts, “I may be getting it close to something readable.”

Mark Sutton has recently become coordinator of the College Composition program at Kean University, where he is Assistant Professor of English-Writing.

Richard Allen recently completed law school at Duke University and is now working as a lawyer in Washington, DC. He continues to write and in the spring of ’08 won second place in the Independent Weekly’s annual poetry contest. His work was also featured in the anthology Poetry DailyEssentials: 2007 (Sourcebooks).

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Rebecca Morphis is the managing editor of NC State University’s alumni magazine, NC State. Her article in that magazine, “Building a Branch on the Tree of Life,” won the award for science writing. She’s also working on a project with a friend, a cookbook for new moms with the working title ‘Sippynini: A Fun Mom’s Guide to Spillproof Entertaining’ (it’s a tongue-in-cheek guide with cocktails and recipes) to having a life when you’re a slave to the two-and-under set. They hope to finish the proposal in the next few months, children permitting.

Anna Peepers has returned from living in the UK for 7 years. She has been seeking her vocation, recently beginning work as a teaching assistant in 1st grade, and hopes to return to school for a Master’s in teaching at the Elementary level.


Ross White is the editor of Indy, the magazine of short poetry and microliterature, and the publisher of Ball City Press (http://ballcitypress.com). He taught poetry in the Creative Writing Program at Carolina in 2006-2007. He lives in Durham, NC. His work has appeared in Tar Rope Poetry, Carolina Quarterly, and New England Review, and most recently in Poetry Daily.

Chris Barge worked until recently as a newspaper reporter covering politics for the Rocky Mountain News in Denver. Currently he works as the development director at The Community Foundation serving Boulder County. He lives in Boulder with his wife Erin, and their daughter Ellery.

Stephen Brower works in music marketing and A&R at Vanguard Records, and has signed artists such as Greg Laswell, The Watson Twins, Camper Van Beethoven, and Nellie McKay. He also writes a film blog at pocketcinemephile.com, where his annual year-end lists have been excerpted by pocketcinephile.com, where his annual year-end lists have been excerpted by

Laura Emerson is currently the literary chair on the Pacific Grove Cultural Arts Commission, and in that capacity is actively working with a committee of dedicated citizens to organize the City’s first annual cultural/literary festival.

Phillip Locey has recently moved to Lexington, KY, and is roughly halfway done with his first book, a fantasy novel he is hoping to finish sometime in the spring.

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Heather McDonald completed her MFA in Writing at the University of San Francisco in 2003 and continues to live there, where she works managing digital assets for a game company, and writing. She is currently finishing a novel and a short story collection, both of which are set in the mountains of western North Carolina.

Rebecca Myers completed her MFA in poetry at NYU in 2006, where she was a Goldwater Writing Fellow for two years. Now she teaches poetry at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois. Her chapbook, Gronk, is forthcoming from Finishing Line Press. She is working on a collection of humor essays and maintains a blog at http://fromshotosilou.blogspot.com/

Kelley Slebos headed west after graduating from UNC and earned a law degree from Stanford. She started practicing corporate law with a big law firm in San Francisco in 2003, married her college sweetheart (Matt Slebos, UNC ’98) in a New Year’s Eve wedding in 2004, quit her job in November 2005, travelled the world for 90 days. She went back to San Francisco and made the decision to take a job with a software company negotiating licensing contracts, went through a huge corporate merger when Oracle bought her company in mid-2008, gave birth to a beautiful red-headed, blue-eyed boy in July 2008 (Leo James), quit her job in November 2008 and is planning a move back to Chapel Hill in early November 2008 (Blake Crouch). She’s a Korein Fellow, where she will work on her first novel. She’s represented by Marianne Gibbons and published with Copperconstruct Press. She’s currently completing a collection of short fiction entitled “Uncage Me.” Please visit his website at www.blakecrouch.com.

Linda Horne is completing her second year of the MFA program at Johns Hopkins. She was a work-study scholar at Bread Loaf Writer’s Conference last summer.

Wendy Spitzer’s avant-pop ensemble, Felix Obelix, will tour to the South by Southwest music festival in March 2009. She was a recipient of a 2009 Orange County Arts Commission grant and a 2008-2009 Durham Arts Council Emerging Artist grant, both specifically for her songwriting work with Felix Obelix. She released a limited-edition EP in January 2009, and a full-length album is forthcoming. In January 2009, she put on a large-scale, community-building time capsule event in conjunction with the Carrboro Arts Center, the documentary company Monnow Media, and the Preservation Society of Chapel Hill. Don’t forget: if you’re alive in 2059, look under the Horace Williams Building time capsule event in conjunction with the Carrboro Arts Center, the documentary company Monnow Media, and the Preservation Society of Chapel Hill. Don’t forget: if you’re alive in 2059, look under the Horace Williams Building time capsule event in conjunction with the Carrboro Arts Center, the documentary company Monnow Media, and the Preservation Society of Chapel Hill.

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Oliver Carter returned to N.C. after graduating from NYU School of Law in 2006, where he was a Korein Fellow, served as President of the Law School, and received the Vanderbilt Medal for Service. Oliver spent the bulk of 2008 working for Senator Kay Hagan, and this year he will serve as a Legislative Assistant in the N.C. Senate.

Patrick Hunnicut recently moved to New York City and took a job managing office operations at a public-relations firm. He continues to write on the side.


Kimberly O’Connor is finishing an MFA at the University of Maryland. One of her poems, “Thrush,” was nominated by her program for the 2009 AWP Intro Journals contest.

Erin Wunker has completed her PhD in English Literature and is teaching at the University of Calgary.

Chapter & Verse
WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU.

At Carolina, we realize writing is a pursuit that takes place over the course of a lifetime. We want to hear about it.

If you have some news you’d like to share with your Carolina friends, family and former teachers, please send it our way, at C&V@unc.edu. Whether you’re making books, making babies, or simply making a life, we’d love to hear from you.

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Harmony Johnson was recently promoted to Communications Director from Promotion Project Manager at Kanuga Conferences Inc. in Hendersonville, N.C. She is responsible for brand management and integrated communications strategies for Kanuga, the world’s largest Episcopal camp and conference center.

Geoff Wessel taught in Korea for over 10 years and has just returned from his two-year post. His new job is with American Speech-Language-Hearing Association in Rockville, MD. where he will be manager of continuing education services.

Brent Winter is a freelance editor living in Carrboro and writing a screenplay with his best friend. As the project enters its third year, he wonders if this is what childbirth is like, or what childbirth would be like if the baby had the shoulders of a linebacker and the mother’s contractions were about a month and a half apart.

CLASS OF ’04

Dorothy Ball had two poems published recently in the 92nd Street Y literary journal, Pyladm.

Brittney Forristor has ventured to the other side of publishing and now works as an advertising account executive for Garden & Gun magazine—a beautifully produced magazine about the magic of the New South. It is an absolute must-know about publication for everyone involved with the UNC Creative Writing program. www.gardenpromotion.com. While she is not putting pen to paper, she considers herself very lucky to be part of a magazine that celebrates some of the South’s most notable writers.

Matthew Salesse received his MFA in 2006 at Emerson College, which led him to blog editing for the literary magazine Ploughshares. He has taken a year off now to work on a novel, but will return in the fall to do his thesis and take on the editorship of Ruderer. Recently Matthew has started an online project of essays written live (http://live-essays.blogspot.com) that’s led to a chapbook forthcoming from Publishing Genius Press. He has fiction forthcoming in Glamor and Poem Hawaii. He has also received awards from Glimmer Train and Mid-American Review. He invites submissions from alums, current students, faculty, etc. to Ruderer, which is the graduate journal of Emerson College. www.redividerjournal.org.

Catherine Varner is enjoying her family, maternal grandmother in Toronto, Canada, and recently published a narrative about it in the December 2008 Canadian Medical Association Journal.

CLASS OF ’05

Dianna C. Calareso moved to Boston to attend Lesley University, where she earned her MFA in Creative Writing (creative nonfiction track) in 2007. Shortly after graduating she completed a memoir, At ease: A Soldier’s Final Battle. This memoir began as her graduate thesis about her grandfather’s battle with Alzheimer’s. She is currently working as an associate editor at Pearson Custom Publishing, a division of Pearson Education, and tirelessly submitting her work to local journals and contests.

Lauren Moseley received her MFA in Creative Writing in 2008 from UNC Greensboro, where she also served as the Poetry Editor of The Greensboro Review. She was a finalist in The Southeast Review’s 2008 poetry contest, and her poem “El Rio Mama” appeared in the journal’s most recent issue. She currently teaches introductory English composition and literature classes at UNCG.

Daphne Muller is currently working at Columbus University, applying to graduate school, and working on a novel. She reported on the presidential election for several websites and wrote an op-ed for the Huffington Post.

Nick Parker is in his final year at the University of Alabama MFA program, where he is serving as the editor of Black Warrior Review and finishing the first volume of his graphic novel.

CLASS OF ’06

Selena Beckman-Harned received her Master’s in Professional Writing from Carnegie Mellon in December 2008, and is currently working as the newsletter editor of the Center for Human Science. She is also a freelance writer with WeddingDNA.com.

Lisa Bevevino received her Master’s Degree in French at the Ohio State University in June of this year, and is now studying for her Ph.D. in Medieval French at OSU in the Department of French and Italian. She also is working on some translations from Medieval Occitan to English of poems, songs, and novellas.

Philip McFee, “Birds Are Entangled By Your Feet and Men By Their Tongue,” the title story of his senior fiction thesis, will be included in Marianne Cang’s new anthology of North Carolina short stories, forthcoming from UNCG. He lives in Cleveland, Ohio.

Ashley Rosen is graduating in May from law school at the University of Georgia in Athens, GA, with an interest in environmental law. She spent the summer in Anchorage, Alaska, working as Trustees for Alaska, a nonprofit environmental law firm. She has not much poetry since starting law school, but is hoping to find some time for it after graduation.

Matt Saldana is a staff writer at the Independent Weekly. He was published in Best AltWeekly Writing and Design 2008 for his coverage, in the Jackson Free Press, of the federal kidnapping trial of former Klamans James Ford Seale.

Jill Steinberg is currently in her third year of law school at the University of Cincinnati College of Law in Cincinnati, Ohio, and is scheduled to graduate in May 2009. She is an Articles Editor for the College of Law’s Law Review. She is co-authoring an article with one of her professors on the legal implications of second-generation antipsychotic drug litigation.

CLASS OF ’07

André Fernandes is writing and may go to graduate school in the coming year.

Emily Fisher lives in DC and works for the ocean conservation non-profit Oceana. She contributes to and edits Oceana’s website, and recently wrote a five-part series about sea turtles on Bal Head Island—http://community.oceana.org/week-sea-turtles.

Zachary Jepsen is on a quest, seemingly fruitless, to become a military officer. Should he succeed in being dangled from joining all three branches he plans to write a book, How I Did Not Join the Military.

Andy Jones is in the graduate screenscriting program at the American Film Institute Conservatory.

Hannah Louise Poston spent the fall working on her manuscript at the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, NH. She is writing and directing a piece at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lake-shore in Michigan. Poems from the in-progress are published in several journals, including Poetry Northwest, Ninth Letter, and Mosaic. After nearly two years of concentrated work, she is taking a break from the book to tour Belgium as a member of the cast of the avant-garde political theatre piece W3D (just the law texts) by NY playwright/director Kevin Doyle, a fellow MacDowell colonist.

CLASS OF ’08

Andrew Chan is currently pursuing an MA in cinema studies at NYU and working as an editorial intern at Film Comment magazine. His film and travel through Europe and Asia. Some of his writing can be found at southernharvard.blogspot.com.

David Hodges is living in Brooklyn, where he works as a paralegal. A story of his, “How to Tell a True Love Story,” placed 2nd in a contest, and will be anthologized this spring. Before matriculating to law school he hopes to travel through Europe and Asia.

Sean Honea is studying to be a minister at Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, California, and considering becoming a Navy Chaplain, a University Chaplain, or partnering with a non-profit such as the Red Cross or Oxfam in Disaster Relief work.

Parker Wolz wrote a travel piece about an experience she had living in Shanghai, China, for a month. The piece is published on a website called beastie, and can be found online at: http://berkeley.berkeley.edu.

In Memoriam

Kate Bockman

HONORS IN POETRY WRITING CLASS OF 2005
Describe the World

"We have so much work ahead of us. Our to-do list is nothing less than the greatest problems of our time: Cure diseases, and get those cures to all the people who need them. Find and invent clean energy. Inspire students in our public schools. Feed seven billion people. Describe the world, and replace conflict with understanding."

—Holden Thorp, UNC-Chapel Hill Chancellor-elect, May 8th, 2008