Creative Writing and Reading Continue To Flourish At Clemson

Brock Clarke, English

In the fall, Dr. Catherine Paul and I received a Teaching Initiative Grant to begin the Visiting Writers and Teachers Series which will bring to campus award-winning fiction writers and poets who are also renowned teachers. In forming such a series, Dr. Paul and I hope to stress the important connections between the teaching of writing and the act of writing itself; but we also hope to enable our students to make informed, intelligent decisions about what it takes to be a fiction writer or poet and also about how one might make a living as a fiction writer or poet in a world which considers writing not so much a profession as an excuse not to have one.

The first artist in the Visiting Writers and Teachers Series was short story writer Lee K. Abbott. Abbott is Professor of English and Director of the Creative Writing Program at the Ohio State University, which has become, under his direction, one of the top Master of Fine Arts programs in the country. Professor Abbott is a masterful, renowned teacher, who, in addition to his work at Ohio State University, is a faculty member of several notable summer writing programs as the Yale Summer Writing Program, the New York State Writers Institute, and the University of Iowa Summer Writers Conference, among others. As my students know, I am so in awe of Lee Abbott’s teaching that I steal from his pedagogical bag of tricks every chance I get, and I’m not at all ashamed to admit it. Professor Abbott is the author of six award-winning collections of short fiction, and he has earned numerous awards and a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. His work regularly appears in such prominent magazines and journals as Harper’s, The Atlantic, Boulevard, North American Review, Gettysburg Review, Story, and Georgia Review, and his fiction has been reprinted in The Best American Short Stories, The Prize Stories: The O. Henry Awards, and The Pushcart Prize, which are the three highest honors for writers of short fiction in this country. Indeed, Professor Abbott is widely considered one of our best short story writers, the best to Flannery O’Connor, Eudora Welty, Ernest Hemingway, and John Cheever, and one of the increasingly rare writers who concentrates exclusively on short fiction. Professor Abbott not only writes and teaches, but also reads from his work.

As pleased as we were with Professor Abbott’s visit, it should be said that his reading capped a series of remarkable readings on campus this academic year. If the writer John Dufresne is correct—and he is, in general, he says that an author’s duty is to create “a world more vivid and compelling than the one you came from,” then the world has been particularly bright this past year which begins with Clemson University’s Writers’ Harvest reading, an annual event in which writers nation-wide raise money for the anti-poverty organization Share Our Strength. Clemson’s creative writing faculty—Skip Ellisinger, Jean Korndorfer, Ron Moras, Keith Morris, David Tillinghast, and I—participated in this year’s reading, which was held in front of an overflow crowd in Vickers Hall. Later during the fall semester, Dr. Freedom’s Child, and Susan Kelly, author of the Carolina Novel Award-winner How Close We Came. Finally, Irish poet Rita Higgins recently gave a notable reading at the Madron Center in association with the Irish Studies Conference. We should all be pleased with the popularity of our year’s readings, for it ensures two things that there will continue to be more of them and that the English Department and Clemson as a whole will be thought of as a place where the creative arts flourish, where the fiction writing and poetry scene is something to which faculty, students, and to the community outside the university as well.

We also hope to enable our students to make informed, intelligent decisions about what it takes to be a fiction writer or poet and also about how one might make a living as a fiction writer or poet in a world which considers writing not so much a profession as an excuse not to have one.
Margaret M. Sinka, Language

In place since 1995, Clemson University's intensive language program during the second summer session should not be, but to some extent still is—a program with the attributes of a well-kept secret rather than of a widely recognized success story. "In diverse," you? No, not when you're人事 in the landscape of the College of AAR and the CLIP (Clemson Language Intensive Program) website represents this year's efforts to publicize more effectively what is undoubtedly a unique educational opportunity.

The program started as the brainchild of Professor Steve Meisheimer, now Assistant Dean of Engineering. Inspired by the English language skills and the internationalism of graduate students from Germany studying in the Department of Chemical Engineering, he was particularly receptive to comments from a BASF representative at a professional meeting that stressed the need to prepare engineers for the international marketplace. Meisheimer and Professor Chris Priester of the Mechanical Engineering Department started collaborating with Professor John Bednorz of the Language Department to devise a mechanism for the internationalization of the engineering curriculum. In the spring of 1992, aiming at higher enrollment figures and that at more internationalization, the three Clemson professors submitted a grant proposal to SC/CoED, a NSF-sponsored national engineering education coalition. In the two years after the grant was approved, many contacts were made with regional international and US-owned multinational companies. An industry-based Advisory Board was established in order to structure the program to meet the needs of global companies and to secure the infrastructure to support overseas internships. With the full commitment of area international firms such as BASF, Puget Sound, and Michelin, the IEC Program was called the College of Engineering. The first year was a success and the program expanded.

The presence of EPIC students in advanced language courses has certainly enriched these courses, and on a more concrete level—EPIC funds (now depleted) have contributed substantially to the acquisition of contemporary programs nationally. Unlike programs elsewhere which enroll mainly language majors with a few returning engineering students, CLIP's emphasis is on giving returning engineering students a chance to take courses in their major language, with their engineering curriculum and benefit as well from internships with international companies both in the US and abroad.

The presence of EPIC students in advanced language courses has certainly enriched these courses, and on a more concrete level—EPIC funds (now depleted) have contributed substantially to the acquisition of contemporary business and materials for the Language Lab. At the annual meeting of the Advisory Board, many engineering students who have participated both in the Language Department's intensive summer session and in the overseas internship program tend to praise industry leaders in the most glowing terms possible these two components of their Clemson education.

No longer limited to students in the engineering and/or business fields, the immersion program—curiously offered in French, German, Japanese, and Spanish—under the acronym CLIP—began modestly in 1995 but since 1997 has drawn more than 50 students from several different majors. It is, of course, particularly popular with Language and International Trade majors, with students preparing for study abroad, and with students eager to advance more rapidly to 300 and 400-level language courses.

These intensive language courses represent groundbreaking...
Tom Feelings: A Voice, A Vision

Renowned illustrator and author Tom Feelings was a featured speaker at Clemson's 1988 Children's Literature Symposium, sponsored by the Department of English. He spoke eloquently of his celebration of African life, the illustrated children's books Moja Means One and Jumbo Means Hello, and of his acclaimed picture book of the forced crossing of the Atlantic by enslaved Africans, The Middle Passage, a work twenty years in the making.

It is said that the purpose of art is to create order out of chaos and confusion. When I am asked what kind of work I do, I answer: I am an illustrator, a story teller in visual form, who tries to reflect and interpret black life as I see it and feel it... I am an African who was born in America...

Storytelling is an ancient African tradition in which the values and history of a people are passed on to the young verbally. Moja Means One and Jumbo Means Hello project a joyful image of African life. In 1958 I started drawing from life the children in my own black community in Brooklyn, New York. Over the years I've done hundreds of drawings from life, of men and women, but mostly of children-right on the spot. And I have learned never to underestimate them. Sometimes I could feel a sense of the adult within a child and many times see the child staring at me from within an adult's face.

Months ago, in my local bookstore in Columbia, South Carolina, I was autographing The Middle Passage when I spotted, passing through the crowd a young white woman and her son, a tousle-haired little boy about seven years old with a big, bright smile and blue eyes shining with excitement. Clutched in his arms were my two picture books, Jumbo Means Hello and Moja Means One, for me to sign—which I did, thanking him for the wonderful gift of his admiration reflected in his small, glowing face. I saw him pick up a copy of The Middle Passage and question his mother about it. I saw her slowly turning the pages and going through the images with him, trying to explain how and why horrible things were happening on this slave ship to people who, to him, clearly looked like me. And then I heard, out of his mouth at least, clear as a bell, 'But Mommy, that's not fair!'

Books can be wonderful tools for enlightenment, because through them we are capable of reaching and intensifying children's perceptions of reality. We can stimulate their imaginations, widen their minds and strengthen their spirits. By telling them the truth of the past, we can prepare them to face reality, reject the shallow and false, and recognize when they are being lied to.

The Middle Passage is for black people all over the world, inside and outside the continent of Africa; it is a connecting spiritual link. But because its form is that of a narrative picture book, without words, it is open to all people, to young people, black and white, who should know real how the truth of this painful period in our history, as well as to teenagers and adults of all ages, who should have told this story as young children.

The lesson of The Middle Passage, the saga of slavery, is the opening up, through the story, of the viewer's humanity. The humanity won by the slaves and their descendants belongs to humanity everywhere. The door is open now closed for everyone by this story. If the very worst opposition has been unable to wipe out intelligence, compassion, honor, faith, and, above all, a tremendous, ingrained quality of hope, then the slaves' victory is the victory of the best in all of us.
in love with Shakespeare

“Shakespeare’s magnificent Elizabethan play, "Macbeth," was a revelation of imagination stirred by performances and fueled by audiences, many of whom had never seen such a spectacle.”

Launched into an imaginative frenzy by the strength of Actors, played selectively by Lisa Merce, the production featured Equity Actor Tony Buss as a Prospero transformed by the suffering he causes on the island and a menacing but dignified Macbeth, played by R. W. Smith. Shenandoah Shakespeare Express (SSE) returned to Clemson for the eighth year with three productions in multiple performances. "The Merchant of Venice," directed by Jim Warren, offered viewers a chance to see the evil of anti-Semitism in the era of Queen Elizabeth when thousands of Jews were banished from England by royal decree. David Schneider walked the line of presenting Shakespeare to the malicious merchant that he is in the play, while sparking sympathy for the Jew who is wronged by his fellow Venetians, abandoned and robbed by his gangster to marry a Christian, and forced to convert to Christianity.

For many, the high point of the festival was the production of "The Knight of the Burnt Paysle" written by Francis Beaumont, a contemporary collaborator of Shakespeare, and directed by Ralph Cohen, the founder of Shenandoah Shakespeare Express. Cohen described the production: “Imagine Horner and Irvine as proteins who buy tickets to a show in New York and then directing the show in a theater on their own.”

The audience in the Brooks Center laughed at their hard dollars off at the outrageous situations of the actors by off and on stage members of the audience, attempting to direct a production that provided a local apprentice, one Ruff, a chance to tell jokes, protect himself in distress, and dramatically on stage in a play that most of us agreed was funnier than anything Shakespeare wrote.

Many other performances packed the Brooks Center to see Macbeth in a beautiful, nonetheless and highly stylized production of "The Scottish Play," which directed for SSE by David Johnson. Walter Urich, returning to his role as Prospero, directed a second season with SSE, dominating the entire festival with his powerful performances as the mad Poet, supplanting the comic of Mr. Hamlet to "your" and the melancholy merchant of Soul in "The Merchant of Venice."

Finally, Warehouse Theatre of Charleston raised the roof of the Brooks Center with their hilarious production of one of Shakespeare’s silliest comedies, "Twelfth Night," directed by Jack Young in a 1920s-styled production featuring W. C. Fields’ "Till We Meet Again" show as Toby Belch and his sidekick Andrew Aguecheek (Grant Moreton) who appeared variously in Harold Lloyd and Tom Miz, the production offered some bold experiments in non-traditional playing with superb African-American actors Dov Harden Thomas and Mark Williams as Olivia and Orsino, who are paired off at the end of the play with each other, but with the separated twins Viola, played expertly by Corinne Malinoff, and Sebastian, played by Susan Scott.

One observes, retired New York High School principal, David Galvin, noted, "The Shakespeare Festival was breathtaking, planned and implemented with expertise, a sense of fun, and great humanity. Harold Bloom would certainly sing your praises. What more could we ask?"
Planning Program Visits Charleston Area

Barry Nock, Planning Studies

The entire faculty and student body of Clemson's program in City and Regional Planning visited with various public and private agencies in Charleston January 26-30, 1990. The purpose of the field trip was to expose students to a variety of issues and planning responses faced by a metropolitan area and its various entities. While the two and a half days were very busy, we all felt that we had just gotten an overview of the many interesting issues and activities that Charleston is facing. Both public and private sector planners, analysts and developers were extremely generous with their time and shared their experiences quite openly with us.

Using three vans, a few cars and a sophisticated "walkie-talkie" system, we traveled to and around the region, finding our way to the appointed places on time throughout the trip. We did demonstrate several times that the most direct route between points is not always the shortest.

Several public agencies met with us: Charleston City Planners Yvonne Fontenberry and Tim Keane provided a briefing on the city's comprehensive plan and a variety of projects being undertaken by the City. In addition to economic development projects, we also had a chance to visit several community development and housing projects.

Planners from Charleston County also shared their draft comprehensive plan with proposed growth boundaries only a day after it had been approved for presentation to County Council. We all appreciated hearing of their experiences in working with the planning commission and many other interested parties in the region to work out the general concepts as well as specifics included in the plan.

Jarl Ford, head of the Mount Pleasant Planning Department, shared some of his experiences in working in a rapidly developing area in Charleston County. The mayor contributed some tales of political intrigue that enabled all of us to appreciate the interactions necessary to make planning work in real situations.

We were also fortunate to be able to visit sites and meet with several developers, including Frank Hofton (Embassy Shores, Hampton Inn, Captain Harry's all near the City Visitor's Center); Steve Dulsot of Daniel Island; and one of the developers of the L'Horizon housing development in Mount Pleasant. Students saw the interplay between non-traditional design concepts and market feasibility in the housing developments. While physical access may have been a minor factor, factors seemed most driven to visiting and re-visiting Captain Harry's after our busy daily schedule of sessions was completed. Planning students developed a powerful diet for learning by doing.

The complex coastal environment was also a focus of our visit. Chris Steele, the Office of Coastal Resource Management, took us to several sites along Sullivan's Island to illustrate the nature of coastal conservation and development policy. Discussing students of development and conservation made for an impact when we were standing on the property involved. Another aspect of coastal issues was addressed during our visit to the regional office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NOAA staff and current Geographic Information System (GIS) and other technical means to analyze a variety of coastal issues. Since all of our students use some form of GIS in their studies, they were fascinated by the sophisticated use of this tool by NOAA.

Clemson's Student Chapter of SCAPA obtained funding for the trip through their annual auction, SCAPA Contributions, and Clemson University Student Government. The experiences gained in this trip are being used as examples in most courses. Of course, the various social interactions will be great for many future conversations—we certainly look forward to the future late night adventures of "Dr. Disco".

McCoy Uneartns the Botanical Garden

Brandon Shally, Chemistry major taking English 314

With the arrival of springtime in Clemson comes the annual addition of a land sculpture in the Botanical Garden. This year's work, by Karen McCoy, is the sixth sculpture created through a partnership of the Garden, the Rudolf E. Lee Gallery and the landscape architecture program, with affiliates in the English, art and horticulture departments. McCoy is an internationally known artist who teaches at the Kansas City Art Institute. Whether she is "mining in" Denmark, Lithuania, or here in Clemson, she incorporates local history and natural materials into her work.

She explained to the more than 60 students who collaborated with her, "When I flew over the Upstate, I could see patches of red earth. I knew before I arrived that I wanted to work with the clay."

When she arrived in Clemson, she traversed the Garden's 220 acres before selecting a site located on the stream where a ravine exposes the rich red clay. McCoy spent considerable time researching Clemson's history. She discovered that Clemson was one of five universities that studied rammed earth construction techniques in the 1950s and 40s. With the help of students, faculty, and Cooper reference librarian Pam Draper, McCoy was able to consult the original Clemson University publications that reported on the rammed earth studies and land surveying controversies from that time period.

That history and the red earth are reflected in McCoy's 28 rammed earth blocks of various sizes that are placed within a grid marked with Mondo grass. A fence line, placed years ago by a farmer, became the axis for establishing the grid. Increments of the grid are based on McCoy's height of 5'5" while the tallest block of 6'8" tall, 2' wide and 6'8" long reflects the height of the tallest student participating in the project. The rammed earth blocks have a band of topsoil that was extracted from the block's foundation, to show replacement of the earth.

The site offers two perspectives to its visitors. From afar, the piece can be seen as a small community set on the crest, reflecting what McCoy learned about expectations for the sculpture: a large influx of people and traffic moving into the area setting near water. Another perspective is gained as the visitor wanders through the colony to examine the individual blocks as separate pieces of art.

The unique quality of this and the other land sculptures is their constantly changing appearance as they are exposed to the elements, continually creating new art. This interaction of nature and culture makes each visit to the sculpture a new experience.

The tallest rammed earth block reflects the 6'8" height of the tallest student participating in the project.

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Writing for the Community

Technical Writing Students Collaborate with Nursing Center on a Service Learning Project

Barbara Heffron, English

When I joined the Clemson faculty this fall, I was fortunate enough to meet Linda Crew, Executive Director of the Joseph F. Sullivan Center for Nursing and Wellness. We have since worked together on several interdisciplinary projects. In one of our collaborative efforts, Linda and I ran an Advanced Technical Writing course (graduate students and seniors from different disciplines) a difficult problem to solve: to persuade a target audience of African-American women in the Creekwood Apartments, public-housing complex to take advantage of the Center's subsidized health care services.

African-American women die from breast cancer and cervical cancer at a disproportionately high rate because they do not receive the screenings Anglo women receive. The Joseph F. Sullivan Center, through the BestChance Network, can provide women's health screening for little or no cost, but the staff has tried in vain for two years to attract these women to take advantage of these services. Crew requested that we devise communication tools that would inform this segment of the community of the services offered by the Center. We designed surveys and interviews in the Creekwood Apartments complex and consulted with sociology professor Bill Patterson and Ginger Scarey, Director of the Littlejohn Community Center. The students had to construct projects that addressed both the cultural and technical reasons that their research revealed for the lack of participation in these available services. Students approached the challenges in various ways, surprising both Linda Crew and me with their creativity.

A group of student projects that evolved into a health information fair, held at the Littlejohn Community Center in November. Numerous health care advocates and organizations were present at the successful event. Can McCullough, a former student, wrote, "Our thoughts were carried outside, turned into visible actions; our experience lifted off." And Brenda Byrd felt she had "become a better leader by tackling certain responsibilities" and that she developed her leadership abilities because she "felt a self-motivated inspiration to complete this project."

The class became student-centered to a degree I have never before committed. Graduate student, a graduate student in equine science, said, "[My] views of academic culture have definitely changed from this course. I was unaware of the great strides being made by the world of Arts and Humanities."

A Gallery Without Walls

In the spring of 1996 the nature based sculpture, "Erin's Pony" by Patrick Dougherty was dedicated at its location in the SC Botanical Gardens on the Clemson campus.

The first speaker on the program, President Conantinie Carris, expressed his enthusiasm for public art works noting that his former state of residence, Iowa, has a percent for art program so that all state buildings including universities have art works in public places. The second speaker, John Acorn, former Art Department Chair, spoke in response to President Carris, noting that South Carolina does not have such a program and that our university could and should establish its own percent for art so that our campus would become an art gallery without walls. Acorn also noted the unique partnership that has been established between the Horticulture Department and the Art Department in the nature based art program in the South Carolina Botanical Garden.

To the delight and appreciation of the Art Department, shortly after the dedication ceremony President Carris allocated $25,000 from the R.C. Edwards Endowment Fund for the commissioning and placement of art works on the campus. Acorn, realizing the success of art partnership, contacted all university departments requesting response from those who would be interested. The response was excellent as he received each department, evaluating potential sites and contexts for the placement of art. An Art Department committee consisting of Professor David Houston, Tom Dimond and Dave Docksticher was formed and the site selections were narrowed in two stages which resulted in the final three selections.

Joey Munson, a Clemson graduate who currently has a studio on Staten Island, NY, was chosen to install his "Shelf-Accord," a fabricated mild steel sculpture, in front of Simrie Hall. Sculptor Joe Walters has created a lively installation based on native wildlife for the wall of the Bracken Hall atrium, and Charleston artist Bruno Civitano's oil-on-linen triptych graces the lobby of the Brooks Center for the Performing Arts.

Artists were selected from an open invitation to all South Carolina artists with the assistance of the SC Arts Commission. The success of the first three projects has resulted in a second allocation of $25,000 by President Carris to the Art Department now under the chairmanship of Dr. William Lewis. The Art Department is now in the process of site and artist selection for this second stage of art partnership. In years to come students and visitors to Clemson's campus will find that art is no longer confined by gallery walls. It will have become an integral part of the campus scene.
Alternative Approaches to the Landscape Architecture Studio

Lolly Tai and Don Yimane, Landscape Architecture

In the spring of 1999, we conducted an experimental vertical landscape architecture design studio which integrated the third year LARCH 352 and the fourth year LARCH 452. Our purpose was to develop solutions to the design problem we specified and to test the effectiveness of various design and graphic communication methods during the design process.

We chose a project involving the design of a horticulture therapy and an accessible garden for all people, especially those with physical and mental challenges, to be sited in the SC Botanical Garden. As a response to the Centennial Park Project initiative promoted by the SC American Society of Landscape Architects. As the centennial of the American Society of Architects' (ASLA) Centennial Celebration, 100 Parks will be the Society's gift to the nation. Chapter by Chapter, ASLA will create or renovate 100 green spaces for communities. The program will be carried out by

for each phase of the project's time log, the most efficient level was the handcomputer group. Overall, the hand group spent a total of 452 hours, which is 129 and 355 hours less than the hand or computer groups, respectively. This is due to the fact that day had a chance in determining the time that would be done more easily be hand or

Thirty-two students designed their projects concurrently in three groups. Each group used different techniques in their design and

Thirty-two students designed their projects concurrently in three groups. Each group used different techniques in their design and
drawing methods ranging from: 1) designing and drawing by hand only; 2) designing and drawing by computer only; and 3) designing and drawing by hand/computer. As unique aspects of the studio, this approach enabled us to compare and evaluate the clarity and efficiency of each of the methods.

put-on group gradually developed the ability to judge the scale of the site by familiar references such as street and parking stall dimensions. Still the total time they spent on computer generated conceptual design took more than the other two groups.

Students from the three groups had individual attitudes toward the methods used. The hand/computer group was most satisfied due to the freedom of choices. The hand-only group was disillusioned with simple tasks that became weary and labor intensive. The computer group was both satisfied and frustrated at the same time.

Susan England summarized:

"Expressing our ideas in the drawings to the level of detail that
we imagined in our minds was hard. This whole process was now
in focus, designing from beginning to end on the computer, and our
coordination with the mouse was not fully developed. On a lighter
note, it was nice not to have to redrew the base map 5 times for
each kind of drawing, and we were
able to come up with more impres-
sive looking research boards
because of the increased images and
colors. We also had something
different to put into our portfolios.”
Chris Thompson added, “The
experimental studio was a great
idea. I was in the computer-only
group, and it forced me to learn
more about computer graphics.
I have been interested in 3-D mod-
eling for a while and this gave me
the time to actually practice it. Al-
though I had several problems with
the computers, it was a great
experience.”

Drew Watson commented: “I
really enjoyed the experimental
studio. I was in the hand-computer
group, so I could see the best of
both worlds. Some things were
easier with the computer but by
being able to work by hand, I could
avoid the technical problems that
the computer had. The project was
a great experience and I hope to do
more studio work this way.”

Kelly Blevs noted, “I liked
working in the hand-only group.
This project forced me to learn how
to hand letter. Before this project
my hand lettering was horrible. I
also learned a lot from the 4th year
students in our group.”

Three alternative designs were
presented at the
Hayden Hall Confer-
ence Center
on February
12, 1995,
attended by
architects,
landscape
architects,
profes-
sional faculty,
students, and
staff,
including the
students who
used
computers, the
location of the
computers in
the studio
rather than the
students.
These students were nosing in the studio environment
and sometimes missed out on
spontaneous feedback and had to
make more of a conscientious effort to
get it. The group that could choose between the
school and the computer was more efficient.
The project was an effort to give
the students satisfaction with the overall
design process and the overall
presentation. However, the hand con-
structed models were easy to
review and since they were
physically still on display after
the presentation, more people had a
chance to see them again, as
opposed to computer generated
models which were reviewed only
during the presentation.

Overall, this project was a
beneficial experience for students,
as well as us. Students appreci-
at ed the opportunity to work in a
research studio environment and on
an actual “real world” project that
will be realized in the near future—a project that will be a
significant event in the
students’ careers. Our collaborative
efforts were very rewarding as we
worked diligently to

1. Computer model of the
overlooking gardens’ duck pond
2. Image of entrance to
3. Final version of the alternative
design
4. Students participating in the
model building process
5. Alternative master plan
6. First version of the alternative
master plan

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Critical Thinking

This year Clemson had six participants in the American College Theatre Festival Region IV Critics Institute, more than any other school in the region. Each of the more than 30 participating students submitted four reviews written under a very tight journalistic schedule. Judges forwarded the winning reviews to the Kennedy Center with reviews from the other regions in the country, and one student was chosen to receive the Medal of Honor and to attend, all expenses paid, a summer at the Eugene O'Neill Playwriting Retreat. Clemson graduate student Dan Burns won this year’s grand prize winner. What follows is his account of the experience and his winning review of John Guare’s House of Blue Leaves, ed.

A Critic In Training
Dan Burns, Graduate Student, English

The Kennedy Center’s American College Theatre Festival offers students a chance each year to participate in a task as ungodly as it is rewarding; indeed, if one has never experienced true terror before (not just the intellectual variety mind you) the Critics Institute happily provides it. A fairly loose gathering of around thirty students from various schools—Virginia, Alabama, Mississippi, North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida—the Institute allows students from varying disciplines to strengthen their writing by their own means of learning the dramatic approach to review criticism—a notoriously picky style that favors conciseness and economy over the depths traveled by an essay. To add to a line from novelist John Barth: if the novel is the long-distance runner, the short story writer a specialist in sprints, then the reviewer (particularly in the confrontational world of theater) must be the poor soul of-a-gun filling the water cooler at the beginning of the race, and cleaning the coast after.

one tends toward exaggeration with respect to the often contentious relationship between critic and company, but the hurt is often acute, even reactionary—the usual plea (issued from some kind soul) for understanding our readers (on actor as well as critic in most cases): “...but you don’t understand how much work went into this...you can’t say those are the people work extremely hard.” Of course, so did we.

The first day began at 8:30 with a meet and greet dinner at 9:30. We continued until the first play at high noon. This was followed by the first

review, written in a pinch between 2:30 and 6, delivered by 6:30, giving us time for a quick bite followed by the evening performance at 8:30. The evening show reviews were written (at least by this critic) in the wee small hours of the morning, finished a scant couple of hours before we had to shake and head back to the Modlin Center at the University of Richmond, beginning the process all over again.

A terrific experience for our tightly knit (and waist) Clemson crowd, the KC/ACTF certainly provided an atmosphere of cut-out-town fun balanced with the requisite deadline pressures of everyday academics. Hopefully, with continued public and university support, the performing arts, as well as its critics (who wouldn’t have anything to gripe at without it) will continue to serve Clemson well, both at home (as evidenced by Egan’s recent, brilliant Tempest) and on the road.

Enough Spoons For Us All

Exploding like some smoking pholos out of the cultural ash-heaps of mid-1960’s America, John Guare’s savagely surreal burlesque, entitled The House of Blue Leaves, manages to incite so many of the hollow assumptions upon which its targeted country and period are grounded that, in the midst of witnessing such picturesque mirth-telling, the viewer’s experience is elevated to something indefinable: a work of art both historically relevant and universally transcendent. It attempts to inflame the collective consciousness, Guare’s play would seem to demand a professional production—so great are its risks, so crucial its timing. Similarly, the students of the Florida Central College at Jacksonville prove that, in certain rare instances, consummate writing can provoke consumption. Indeed, in their capable, captivating hands, the tropes presents itself equal to the task as dramatic artists of the first order. Exhibiting an ensemble of seemingly limitless energy, Ken Moline and the rest of the production boasts excellent performances by its entire cast. From John Allen’s prematurely neurotic Ronnie, to Laura Moses’s flickering illness, Bunny, The House of Blue Leaves never fails to surprise in its series of heart-stopping shifts along the always-unpredictable dramatic arch of the play. Shaking the audience out of its seat with a reckless, frenetic abandon, McCaulough’s insightful and (soul-full) direction exudes great confidence in his actors’ exceptional skills, supporting them with a clear, sighted, text to faithful approach to translation.

In the assured hands of lighting designer Johnny Pettigrew, Guare’s satire is allowed to burn at, pervasively, both ends—white hot (thunderous pyrotechnics during Ronnie’s bomb) and medium cool (the death palls hues of the finale). Combined with the design’s evocation of the fantasies of the set (again, by Pettigrew), this evocative lighting scheme is clearly one of the most accomplished and detailed in recent memory. With regard to particular to the climactic showering of blue leaves, designer and crew are to be congratulated on such a remarkable culmination: boundless and final in its dark serenity, the sequence quite literally brings the roof down around its characters in a glacial shattering of sky-righting the mad wire, homicidal son, and symptomatic enmity as an absurdly terse epitaph, protagonist Artie Braggins’s bleak New York existence treads the thin line between disappointment and hope. Ben Byrd’s versatile performance as Artie blends the razor’s edge of comic timing with an unexpectedly lyrical rendering of this poor loser’s expiring dreams, trapping us with him in the waking nightmare of day-to-day mediocrity and mindlessness. Conversely, the psychotic dislocations and dissolution of his wife Banana’s act, with a cause and effect circularity, tellingly centered in Holly Riga’s vacant gaze. In a stunning piece of acting, Ms. Riga runs the spectrum of emotions, from despair to hysteria, without ever losing sight of her character’s banned feel, thereof: Looking (to invoke a Bob Dylan lyric contemporary to the piece) into the “vacuum of her eyes,” the bond between audience and actor is repeatedly built to be broken, containing and miraculous tension as we watch her exhausted spirit flicker and fade, candle-like, into the darkening foreground of the final act.

This bond between audience and performer is reinforced with the sarcastic, somewhat disconcerting use of direct address on the part of the cast: “The greatest talent in the world is to be an audience.” Like Artie’s parlance, Gaug Pouer’s stilted speech—showboying, glorifying, the play’s message (or soaring contempt for such a concept), characters, and technique all align in the radical self-consciousness of its approach. Perhaps the most devastatingly self-effacing moment in the piece: "As Enos's（a character the image encapsulates Guare’s alternately prosaic and threatening attack (the player seems to understand Guare’s implicit command: grant me the chance, an audience is perfectly capable of destroying itself). Using the sweet bite of Jesus to send the harsher realities of his message, Guare’s double-edged words actually cut deeper than if they were clinically and more (inexplicably) thrust into the audience. As the only true emotional currency between fact and fiction—what is left, the inexorable pounding (like the audience’s heart) on the flyway door separating the two, Guare’s character quickly assimilate and enter into real world openings by show’s end—all the while deepening the overall impression of regret, frustration, and loss. Like a horse chooing at the bit, the manic magic of FCC’s The House of Blue Leaves is a strain for catharsis, sardonically achieved only with the same small measure of false innocence enjoyed by its perfidious players.

Whether it be Vietnam, Catholicism, television, the cult of personality, or desired fame and fortune, the play’s meditations on such profoundly American themes and subjects, under a microscope wherein the audience can temporarily revel in the sheer madness of society without necessarily suffering it for the cause, is another one of the reasons of Blue Leaves, so closely, mirror our own, is delivered by the FCCC as a bitter, deliberately foreboding and darkly romantic dream—deep, dark, terrifying, and covered in blood.
The Irene Ryan Awards

The Irene Ryan Awards are awarded by the American College Theatre Festival (ACTF), which recognizes excellence in college and university theatre. The awards are given to outstanding student actors and actresses, as well as outstanding student directors and designers. The awards are presented at the annual Festival, which brings together hundreds of theatre students from across the country to compete and showcase their talents.

McKale Publishes Local, International Works of History

Professor Donald M. McKale is the author of several books on the history of the Middle East and Europe. His most recent book, "War in the Middle East: From the First World War to the Present," was published in 2018. In addition to his work on the Middle East, McKale has also written extensively on the history of Germany and Great Britain. His latest book, "German and British Diplomacy in the Era of World War II," was published in 2019.

Tradition: A History of the Presidency of Clemson University

Tradition: A History of the Presidency of Clemson University, edited by Donald M. McKale and Ernest V. Raines, is a comprehensive history of the university's presidency. The book covers the history of the university from its founding in 1889 to the present day, and includes detailed biographies of all of the university's presidents. It is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the history of Clemson University and the development of higher education in the United States.

Robert Bambridge—Planning and Landscape Architecture—researched and wrote, with the assistance of graduate students Chris Kneel and Sandra Scott, the nomination from which the Easley (SC) High School Auditorium was officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Heather Buxton, undergraduate, English and French—has obtained a Fulbright teaching assistantship in France.

Mark Charnay, English—has been asked to serve as the judge for the final of the Irene Ryan Acting Workshop and gave a public lecture at the University of West Virginia for the opening of Color Print USA there.

Beth Daniel, English—was elected to the Executive Committee of the Council of Writing Program Administrators. She also published "Narratives of Literacy: Connecting Composition to Culture" in College Composition and Communication, "F. Y. C. P. Y. Seminars, and WAC: A Response" in Journal of Language and Learning Across the Disciplines, and "Literacy/Quality Theories in Throstling Composition: A Critical Sourcebook of Theory and Scholarship in Contemporary Composition Studies: She also delivered "Art, I Punting Words in Her Mouth" and other Dialogues of making Research Visible" at the Conference on College Composition and Communication and "How Narratives of Literacy Connect Composition to Culture" at the Western Conference on Rhetoric and Composition.

Tara Dinnard, Art—exhibited his paintings at the Gallery West Second Annual Juried Invitational Competition 1999 in Alexandria, VA; the Mixed Media 1999 Juried Competition at the St. Bede Cultural Center, St. Bede, LA (Second Place Award); the 1999 Annual National Works on Paper at the Meadows Gallery, University of Texas at Tyler; the Supermarket 1999 National Juried Competition at the Stop's Supermarket, Kansas City, MO; the 10th Annual Exhibition at E.C. May & Co. at the Addison Gallery, Washington, DC, and the 12th Annual Meenece National Works on Paper at McNeese State University, Lake Charles, LA.


Susan Aronson, English—has been awarded the William Dean Howells Memorial Fellowship in American Literature (1850-1920) by Harvard University. This nationally competitive fellowship will allow her to spend the summer in

Art professor Sydny Cross (left) conducted a workshop on lithography and woodcut techniques at Texas Tech University.

Mirrors invites alumni of the College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities to submit items to be considered for inclusion in future editions of Accomplishments, Milestones and Awards. Please submit items to the address (either postal or electronic) listed in the masthead on p. 2.


Pamela Beckett, English—presented "Medical Rhetoric: Future Goals, Websites, Lectures, and Conferences" at the Medical Historians' Special Interest Group of the Conference on College Composition and Communication and "Teaching About/With Disabilities" and "Discourse, Disability, and the Disability: Bringing Nance Main's 'Carnal Acts' into the Classroom," also at CCCC. She has co-authored A Student's Guide to First-Year Composition, used by all first-year composition students at Clemson University, and co-authored "The Reconstruction in Throstling Composition: A Critical Sourcebook for Theory and Scholarship in Contemporary Composition Studies.

Steve Madison, Speech and Communication Studies—received the Outstanding Faculty Member Award presented by the Clemson University Student Senate Council and the Charles Davis Academic Advising Award presented by the Clemson University Student Senate. He has also received a College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities Teaching Initiative Grant to develop a conflict mediation training course and an Alliance 2002 Planning Grant to identify partners at South Carolina State University, state technical colleges, and K-12 educational institutions in South Carolina for
French, German and Japanese for a five-week session.

Jose Suarez, Languages—received the Cruz de Allende X de Salto award presented by the Spanish Ministry of Education in the name of Juan Carlos I, King of Spain.

Lolly Tai, Landscape Architecture—received the 1999 Outstanding Woman Faculty Award from the President's Commission on the Status of Women at Clemson University. She also received an Outstanding Achievement Award for Stewardship Development from the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources for her professional land planning design work on the Still Water project in Scarsc, SC. The Red Hills Habitat for Humanity project, Clemson, SC—a service learning project on which she collaborated with Prof. Mary Haque (Morticulture and horticulture)—received a South Carolina Housing Achievement Award from the South Carolina State Housing Finance and Development Authority, a Conservation Award from the South Carolina Wildlife Federation, and a Certificate of Achievement from the National Wildlife Federation through its Backyard Wildlife Habitat Program.

Rob Silance, Architecture—participated in the 11th Biennial Southern Visions Photography Competition at the Museum of York County (SC) and had a one-person show of his photographs at the Caron-Gould Gallery in Pendleton, SC.

Humberto Risso, Languages—received the Outstanding Instructor Award for 1997 and 1998 from the Clemson University Panhellenic Council.


Sam Wang, Art—received the title of Alumni Distinguished Professor in Spring 1999.
Philosophy, Religion, and the Scientific Revolution at Clemson University

Thomas Oberdan, Philosophy and Religion

Last May I attended a conference on "Science and Religion" at MIT, a workshop sponsored by the Templeton Foundation to assist college and university faculties in the development of courses addressing the interaction of science and religion, and to award grants to prepare particularly innovative approaches to the topic. (My colleague Steven Gorini and I were lucky enough to receive one of the prizes this year.)

Initially, my attitude toward the workshop was highly skeptical. I feared sitting through talk after talk of science-sharing by uninformed zealots or, at best, failing to learn anything as a result of a high turnover of speakers. (My fears were alleviated. The only speaker who came anywhere close to fitting my expectations was Arthur Peacocke, a quite sober British theologian with impressive credentials in particle physics. The other speakers included Francisco Ayala, a celebrated geneticist with whose work I was passingly familiar, and Owen Gingerich, a top-flight historian of astronomy. After perusing their works, especially Gingerich's, I looked forward to the meeting with enthusiasm."

As a philosopher of science, my training included graduate study in the history of science as well as extensive course work in logic and philosophy and a graduate minor in mathematics. Therefore, I was particularly anxious to hear Gingerich's talk on the impact of Nicolas Copernicus' De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium, commonly regarded as the cornerstone of the Scientific Revolution. I approached Gingerich after his talk, introduced myself, and mentioned some graduate teachers in the history of science, and told him that I was in the Philosophy and Religion Department at Clemson.

"Do you know what they have in the library of Clemson?" he asked, barely concealing his excitement. "I'm stunned, for the only thought in my mind was the library's current funding woes—hardly a cause for celebration! "A second copy of De Revolutionibus," Gingerich blurted, "is something that we were hoping to obtain. It is in the library, but it is not in the collection."

I was curious about the source of this treasure. I asked Michael Kohn, head of Special Collections, how the Scientific Revolution came to Clemson. According to his story, the collection of rare books, including some of the rarest copies of the works of Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton, was acquired by the university in the 1930s, when a local businessman donated a valuable collection of early editions of scientific texts. The university continued to acquire additional collections of rare books, and today the Special Collections division is one of the largest in the country, housing over 50,000 rare and valuable volumes. The collection is particularly strong in the areas of astronomy, physics, and mathematics, and is open to researchers from around the world. Last year, the Special Collections division received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to digitize and make available online a significant portion of the collection. The grant was part of the university's ongoing efforts to make the collection more accessible to researchers and the public. (The grant was secured by a special allotment of $35,000 from the legislature, though the original amount was only $20,000.)

Yet the Special Collections division is not just a repository of rare books. It is an active center of research and learning, with a strong focus on the history of science and the role of religion in shaping scientific thought. The division is home to a team of dedicated scholars who are working to make the collection more accessible to researchers and the public, and to bring the history of science and religion to a wider audience.

In conclusion, the Special Collections division is a remarkable resource for researchers and the public alike. It is a testament to the importance of the intersection of science and religion, and to the ongoing efforts of the university to make this knowledge accessible to all.
American Conference of Irish Studies

Clemson recently played host to "Ireland in the Arts and Humanities, 1899-1999," the Tenth Annual Arts, Lecture, and Exhibition of the American Conference of Irish Studies, organized by Professor Wayne Chapman of the English department, Co-sponsors included the South Carolina Humanities Council, the Clemson University Alumni Association, and the Departments of English, Humanities, and Performing Arts as well as the College of Architecture, Arts, and Humanities, the Irish Churh Club, and Southern Wine and Spirits (for a selling gift in kind).

The theme of the meeting was "Ireland in the Arts and Humanities, 1899-1999," and the conference especially emphasized scholarly papers with a focus on Irish drama, fiction, and poetry in historic, political, and cultural contexts, acknowledging the scholarly tradition in Irish arts and letters.

Panel discussions ranged from individual writers such as James Joyce, WB, and Jack Yeats, Lady Gregory, Seamus Heaney, Brian Friel, and Ciaran Carson, and others, to topics such as "Shaping and Packaging the Nativity: Mags, Myths, and People," "Ireland and the USA," "Creating Writing and Performance Art" and recitations of J. M. Synge's Riders to the Sea and Dennis Gannon's "Loved Ones." Particularly interesting were Frederick and Emily Lapinuodi's scenes from Yeats's "The Player Queen" by puppet presentation and presentations by Tom Redden, Dillon Johnston, and Elizabeth Gruhfeld in one of the closing panels, "Visual Art and Publication Design in Contemporary Irish Literature."

The keynote events were open to the public and included a reading by Seamus Heaney poet Rita Ann Higgins, a screening of the documentary film "Woman in a World" (following discussion led by Irish Times correspondent Nuala Haughey), and a finale featuring three distinguished speakers and a staged reading of W.B. Yeats's play "The Countess Cathleen" in recognition of its first full-scale production at the inaugural of the Irish Literary Theatre in 1899 and of the Abbey Theatre in 1911. The speakers were Anna Birnie (Clemson University), "Wines and Music: Unusual L I c e n s e s"; Ronald Schneid (Emory University), "The Countess Cathleen and the Revival of the Dublin Arts," and Michael Dignam (University of Toronto), "The Countess Cathleen as a Study in Theatrical Genre."

The unique text adapted for the Clemson Players' presentation of the play stems from the edition of the manuscript recently completed by speaker Seamus Heaney and Emeritus Chapman, published in April 1999 by Cornell University Press.

Immediately after the staged reading of the play, the closing reception featured music by members of several Irish bands, libations and treats thanks to the ingenuity of the ad hoc conference committee at Clemson and local friends of all things Irish at the historically Scottish-Irish and African-American Upstate region of South Carolina.

Eddie Smith, Speech and Communication Studies

God reaches down and paints the sky a brilliant orange every evening just at twilight. Out west, the folks don't know the exact shade, but in the southeast they call it Clemson Orange. You see everybody in the world doesn't know the good things we know here in South Carolina. They think that Death Valley is a desert and that "The Eye" is perhaps a local chapter of AAA. Here in Clemson, everyone knows the "song that shakes the south land" and we can all find our way home by following tiger pawls.

Low November, Denise Goforth and I traveled to Pomona, California for the annual Winston Finals of the National Hot Rod Association. The purpose of the trip was two-fold: to seek possible future for the new Mark Brooks Professorship of Sports Communication and to introduce Clemson to the nine thousand or more high school students who attended the NHRA Career Fair.

Students from every school district in the Los Angeles area invited to attend the special event held each fall at the Pomona track.
The Brooks Center
For the Performing Arts

Brooks Center for the Performing Arts
Summer and Fall 1999
Schedule of Events

July 29-31
and Aug. 1..............................Talley's Folly, Clemson Players

Sept. 7...............................The Glenn Miller Orchestra

Sept. 10.............................The 24th Army Ground Forces Band

Sept. 23-26..........................Cleved Nine, Clemson Players

Sept. 28..............................Anne-Marie McDermott, piano

Oct. 7.................................Czech Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra

Oct. 11...............................Avenue

Oct. 30...............................Gospel Clinic

Oct. 31...............................Gospel Showcase

Nov. 1.................................Beauty and the Beast

Nov. 2-7..............................Original Play TBA, Clemson Players

Nov. 9.................................Chanticleer

Nov. 11...............................CU Jazz Ensemble

Nov. 16...............................CU Choral Ensembles

Nov. 18...............................CU Tiger Band Pass-in-Review

Nov. 22...............................CU Symphony Orchestra

Nov. 30...............................Porgy and Bess

Dec. 2.................................CU Symphonic Band

Dec. 10...............................The Nutcrackers

Call 864-656-RSVP (7747) for times, details, ticket prices, and reservations.

Rudolph E. Lee Gallery

On display throughout the summer will be the annual Student Honors Exhibition, featuring the best student work in art and design from all year levels for the 1998-99 academic year.

Charleston artist, Deanna Leonson will open the fall 1999 calendar with an exhibition of her large-scale charcoal figurative drawings, August 16-September 17. The remainder of the fall schedule will be announced at a future date. Gallery hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30-4:30 phone 864-656-3883 for further information.