

# English Department Newsletter

Wake Forest University

## Wake Welcomes Quindlen, Honors Wilson

By Sarah Oettinger ('06), Co-Editor

At the Founders' Day Convocation on Feb. 19, Anna Quindlen, author and Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, spoke about the role of the media in everyday life. Edwin G. Wilson was also awarded the Medallion of Merit following the address.

Quindlen discussed the value of the media and also responded to some criticisms directed toward it. According to Quindlen, the media both attempts to strive for the truth and to play to the public's wishes. She went on to cite the journalist's relatively low median salary of \$30,000 to suggest that journalists are driven by a commitment to the power of the media, rather than by the possibility of financial gain.

Commenting on hate mail she received following a column she wrote advocating the ordination of women as Catholic priests, Quindlen said, "I am not interested in being acceptable." Freedom of the press and freedom of speech, as dictated by The First Amendment, enable the public to remain informed about such controversial topics.



*Anna Quindlen speaks to the Founders' Day Convocation crowd in Wait Chapel.*

Quindlen addressed various popular critiques of the media. Although children and parents alike spend hours in front of the television, prompting many to blame the media for fostering inadequate social interaction, Quindlen said that the lack of community building that takes place outside the home is somewhat offset by the connections people forge because of the common interest in TV. Quindlen also described how the media has promoted a "virtual small town" through shows such as "A Baby Story" and "Trading Spaces," allowing viewers to become familiar with people similar to themselves and creating a sort of

neighborhood of viewers with similar interests.

Touching on the evolution of the media, Quindlen said that although as children, the majority of today's mature audience had viewed television "for white men, by white men," the programming of today provides more diversity. Quindlen recalled having only one news show when she was young, while today a great variety of news programs exist.

In her conclusion, Quindlen emphasized the importance of the media, labeling the "privilege and power to know" as the "most valuable thing on earth."

Following Quindlen's speech, the university recognized Edwin G. Wilson with its highest honor, the Medallion of Merit. Wilson entered Wake Forest as a student at the old campus when he was just 16 years old. After receiving his MA and PhD from Harvard University, he returned to Wake and is now provost emeritus, English professor and administrator. Well-liked by his students and colleagues, the characteristically humble Dr. Wilson graciously received a standing ovation.

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### Inside this issue:

<i>Film Studies Minor</i>	2
<i>Medieval Studies Conference</i>	3
<i>South African Poets</i>	3
<i>WFU English Degrees at Work</i>	4
<i>Multicultural Hauntings Conference</i>	5
<i>Original Poem</i>	6
<i>Required Reading</i>	7

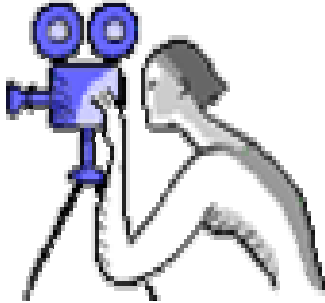
### Special points of interest:

- *WFU's new interdepartmental Film Studies minor (2)*
- *South African poets visit WFU and share their art (3)*
- *Ghosts take over Tribble for the Multicultural Hauntings Conference (5)*
- *WFU English professors share some summer reading suggestions (7)*



## Students Excited for New Film Studies Minor

Erin McInnis ('05)



The university has recently added a Film Studies minor to its list of interdisciplinary degrees. Although Professor Mary Dalton of the Communication Department served as the Coordinator for the 2003-2004 school year, the university has recently appointed Peter Brunette as Reynolds Professor of Film Studies.

Currently, 22 students are film studies minors, a strong beginning for a new program. Michael Soucy, a junior English major, hopes to "gain from this minor a better understanding of why we as a people enjoy films, what draws us to them." Sophomore Jonathan Furr is thrilled to be able to "take classes that [he] will enjoy, find intellectually stimulating and be driven to do well in."

The idea that movies are representative of the times and ideas of the years in which they were made is one of the reasons behind the decision to create an interdisciplinary film studies minor. "Most students... recognize that in the contemporary culture of the world, having the ability to critically consume visual texts is an important part of being a liberally educated person," Dalton said.

Every week, students across campus watch numerous films and spend hours mindlessly devoted to their television sets; according to Dalton, the interdisciplinary nature of the new minor is a way to integrate this pre-existing love for film on campus. Students involved in this minor will not be strictly

contained within one department, but will be able to learn about the nature of films from professors with different approaches and backgrounds.

A film studies committee established guidelines in order to weed out inappropriate courses from the minor and provide more than just entertainment for students. At least one of four themes (film as artifact, film theory, film history, or film production) must be a part of the outlined syllabus for a course. To complete the film studies minor, students must complete eighteen hours of approved courses, including Film Theory and Criticism, Introduction to Film, an International Cinema credit, a course in Production, and an elective credit.

English professor Dr. Lisa Sternlieb teaches a course entitled *Literature and Film*, which is one of the most popular English courses taught. She offers students a chance to read works of literature and watch movies weekly, then discuss and write about related themes and concepts.

The students also discuss how the films portray people and ideas through the images portrayed and film techniques used. Soucy said, "[the integration of film and the minor] is a logical extension of studying different forms of expression."

*"Most students... recognize that in the contemporary culture of the world, having the ability to critically consume visual texts is an important part of being a liberally educated person," Dalton said.*

## South African Poets Share Their Art

Raena Kaneshiro ('06)

On April 13, 2004, Wake Forest enjoyed the company and readings of two South African poets, Yvette Christianse and Ingrid de Kok. Earlier in the day the two participated in an informal discussion held in De-Tamble Auditorium for students and faculty. That night, many students and faculty attended and left the Ring Theater feeling as though they had just received a gift.

Christianse read first, introducing students to her poetry with her soft, comforting voice and thoughtful

verse. She read from her most recent publication, *Castaway*, which is a collection of writings about St. Helena, the island of Napoleon's exile and her mother's birth. Christianse was born and raised in South Africa; at the age of 18 her family emigrated to Australia from apartheid South Africa. A professor at Fordham University, she writes poetry, teaches African-American studies and is currently working on a book about Toni Morrison's fiction.

The poetry of de Kok covered a wide range of

subjects, and its honesty was refreshing. De Kok was born in South Africa, attended school there and in Canada and currently teaches at the University of Cape Town. She has published three poetry collections: *Familiar Ground*, *Transfer*, and *Terrestrial Things*, the last of which deals specifically with South Africa and its AIDS crisis. De Kok's readings from *Terrestrial Things* gave a picture of the South Africa that exists today: the fear, the anxiety, the sense of helplessness that so many people feel in the face of AIDS.



*Christianse reads some of her work.*

*Christianse read first, introducing students to her poetry with her soft, comforting voice and thoughtful verse.*

## First Annual WFU Medieval Conference

By Mary Kate Hurley ('04)

On March 27, Wake Forest medieval students and faculty gathered for the first Wake Forest University Medieval Conference. An idea that had been in the works since the early days of the fall semester, the conference was organized and executed by the Student Medieval Society (also known as Aesir).

The day began with a keynote speech by Emily Brewer ('98, MA '03), who spoke on the significance of swords in the alliterative *Morte D'Arthure*. Six undergraduate students presented papers in two different sessions. Sinead O'Doherty ('04), Mary Kate Hurley ('04) and Scott Tucker ('04) participated in the morning session

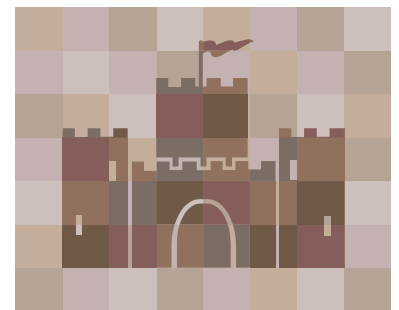
on "The Arthurian Literary Tradition," and Laura Smith ('04), Amber Byerly ('05) and Kari Erickson ('04) presented papers in the afternoon session, titled "Kings and Mystics, a Historical Perspective."

Between the two sessions, a medieval-style lunch served as refreshment. The conference was well-attended, with professors and students from many different academic departments, highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of Medieval Studies. Departments represented included English, History, Classics, Music, Romance Languages and Humanities.

The conference was made possible through the generous support of Dean

Escott. The Student Medieval Society would also like to thank Dr. Sigal and Dr. Overing for their mentoring and support in the planning process.

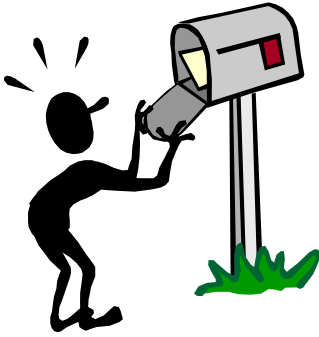
For further information on the Student Medieval society, please contact Mary Kate Hurley at [hurlmk0@wfu.edu](mailto:hurlmk0@wfu.edu) or Amber Byerly at [byeral1@wfu.edu](mailto:byeral1@wfu.edu).





## WFU English Degrees at Work

Wake grads check in to let us know about life after the WFU English department.



- **Kitty Jo Beasley Edwards (BA '48)** was recently published in the poetry anthology, *Word-works*, published by The Writers' Group of the Triad. Both a story and a poem by Edwards were included.
- **Horace L. Bennett (BA '50)** taught English, French and history for 10 years and completed 21 years in school administration. His poem, "Springtime of My Life," appears on page 6.
- **Julian Burroughs (BA '51)** has taught at Wake Forest for 36 years in speech, theater and radio-TV-film.
- **John Brock (BA '54)** writes a weekly column entitled *Southern Exposure—a light-hearted look at Southern Culture* in Georgetown, S.C. He retired from the position of vice president of Mars Hill College last summer. John has also worked as visiting professor, Director of Theater, and vice president at Gardner-Webb University after having been a newspaper editor/publisher, entrepreneur and motion picture producer. He has been married to fellow Wake alumna, **Barbara Land Brock (BA '55)**, for 49 years.
- **Rev. Lynne Moose Lepley (BA '77)** published a children's book, *Three in One: A Book About God* in May, 2004.
- **Vincent E. Gaver (BA '90)** is finishing his PharmD degree at UNC Chapel Hill. He worked to start Sigma Tau Delta, the English honor society, at Wake when he was a student 14 years ago.
- **Christal Robinson Brown (BA '91)** lives with her husband and three children Chattanooga, TN. She works part time with CIGNA HealthCare as a Benefit Consultant. Her English degree has enabled her to work in various positions over the past twelve years, including underwriting, contracts and sales/marketing.
- **Dr. Amy Spangler Gerald (BA '91)** completed her Ph. D. in English at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where she now teaches part time. Amy won the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award for the English department and has published several articles. She and her husband have two young children.
- **Elizabeth O'Donovan Land (BA '98)** is working as a publicist in Montgomery, AL, after having worked in journalism in the Midwest. She and her husband are planning to move to Nashville, TN, later this year, where she hopes to return to writing.
- **Nicole Iacovone (BA '99)** currently works at Accenture and lives in Boston, MA. She hopes to return to school in either public administration or law within the next year or two.
- **Ann Curby (BA '03)** has just received permanent residency in Australia and has been accepted as a law student at the University of Queensland in Brisbane. She hopes to practice environmental law in Brisbane when she completes her degree.
- **Katherine Houle (BA '03)** is currently in her first year of law school at the University of Denver. She plans to graduate in 2006.
- **Taylor Kennamer (BA '03)** is attending the City University of New York beginning in August.
- **Susannah Rosenblatt (BA '03)** is currently working as a political researcher/reporter for the *Los Angeles Times* National Desk, covering the 2004 presidential election from L.A. She has had the opportunity to travel all over the country with this assignment, and she hopes to become a full-time reporter once her year-long stint at the *Times* ends in November.



## Ghosts Haunt Tribble

By Mary Beth DeVilbiss ('04), Co-Editor

The plush red upholstery and the heavy wood paneling of Tribble Hall's Victorian room usually provide a setting that transports students to the library of *Jane Eyre*'s Thornfield, or to the Bennets' sitting room in *Pride and Prejudice*. Today, however, as only thin slivers of light peek through the heavy red drapes and shadowy portraits gaze suspiciously at the students and professors who have interrupted their luxurious silence, the room feels like the setting for an eerie ghost story.

The Victorian room's spooky atmosphere provides a perfect backdrop as four freshman students, members of Dr. Stephanie Hawkins's First Year Seminar, "Haunting," present their final research projects. These carefully prepared Power Point presentations explore different aspects of the fear and myths often associated with mental institutions and prisons, while students in other rooms throughout the building present their own findings about other topics related to the theme of haunting.

Dr. Hawkins, who joined the English department faculty last semester, organized the Multicultural Haunting Symposium as a dynamic way for her students to showcase their final projects in an environment open to the public. The symposium, which took place on Thursday, April 29, in Tribble from 4:30-8 p.m., was advertised around campus by flyers probing, "Ever seen a ghost? Want to?" Any student, faculty member or curious passerby was welcome to wander from room to room, learning about all kinds of paranormal activity, from voodoo to haunted houses.

According to Dr. Hawkins, the symposium was "modeled on a typical humanities conference, ... split into two one-hour sessions, with four panels running concurrently." Each panel consisted of four students, each of whom presented his or her project, leaving enough time at the end of the hour to answer questions from the audience, which included faculty representatives.

The one-hour sessions were separated by a small reception in the Ammons Lounge. Presenters and audience members alike devoured pizza, veggie sticks and soft drinks, glad for a brief return from the paranormal realm to the earthly pleasures of Papa John's and Coca Cola. During the break, freshman Katie Hollerbach, one of the panelists presenting on institutions and prisons, remarked that the seminar, "was a lot of reading. A lot. But the subject matter was a lot more interesting than the stuff my friends were doing for other seminars." Most students concurred with Hollerbach's evaluation, and many noted that they appreciated participating in the unique symposium, which took the place of a regular final exam.

As the sun sank lower during the final hour of panel presentations, the shadows grew longer and the mood became eerier, but panelists forged onward, undaunted by the increasingly appropriate atmosphere. The second round of presentations covered the topics of horror films and hauntings in literature, among others.

The Multicultural Hauntings Symposium answered many myths and misconceptions surrounding the subject of haunting with prolific research and informative presentations. But one incident remains unexplained. During one question-and-answer period, the haunted houses panel was interrupted by impromptu moaning, howling and banging coming from unidentified sources deep within the halls of Tribble. Though the audience responded to the disruption with good-natured giggles, perhaps I was not the only one who reflected on the perplexing architecture of Tribble Hall; who knows how many souls have perished, wandering the labyrinth-like hallways in search of an English 170 class or a women's restroom, left with unfinished business to which they have yet to attend?



*Who knows how many souls have perished, wandering the labyrinth-like hallways in search of an English 170 class or a women's restroom?*





*“I had returned to Old Wake at Wake Forest, but infrequently, and felt lost until my 50<sup>th</sup> year, when I immediately sat down and wrote the enclosed poem.”*

*The Springtime of My Life*

*There is a campus blessed with the warmth of a morning's  
Sunshine:*

*It is a dear place, venerable brick walkways, and  
Ivy-covered buildings  
That I shall forever claim with great  
Devotion.*

*This day I stand near the Old Well and glimpse  
A rocky wall, waist high, all covered  
With greening ivy, and face*

*A full quadrant of stately magnolias, heavy-laden,  
With snowy-white and purple flowers:  
I breathe my fill of fragrant pleasures!*

*Eastward is the brick and plastered chapel  
Where thrice a week inspiring speeches,  
Read by renowned scholars of Greek,  
And Latin, and philosophy,  
Pierced our numb and callous ears.*

*See yonder bell-tower? I tolled it thrice the night before  
I placed the mortar-board upon my brow,  
Then wept in the solitude of my room.*

*All other quadrants I faced with singleness of purpose:  
I see their faces! I know them all!  
Each one I greet by name!  
Today, I know but few who near me stand!  
Their hearts and eyes are full, like my own.  
The thoughts of Wake have twined my heart  
In simple memories, long dormant.*

*It is the season of the year between winter and summer:  
It is a morning blessed with happiness  
Of health and fidelity:*

*It is a day I shall cherish the rest of my life!  
Today, beneath the magnolias,*

*I shall savor the springtime of my life  
once more.*

*When I was twenty-three.*

*4-10-1977*

“The Springtime of My Life” was submitted by Horace L. Bennett ('50). He writes, “I had returned to Old Wake at Wake Forest, but infrequently, and felt lost until my 50<sup>th</sup> year, when I immediately sat down and wrote the enclosed poem.”

The poem was originally published in the local newspaper of Wake Forest, NC. For more information about Wake alum Horace L. Bennett, see “WFU English Degrees at Work” (page 4).

## Required Reading

WFU English professors let us know which books are keeping them up late into the night.

Temple Cone suggests *Mysticism for Beginners*, a book of poems by Adam Zagajewski

Evie Shockley suggests “a collection of short stories by a young woman named ZZ Packer, entitled *Drinking Coffee Elsewhere*. They are sharp, witty, knowing stories that never end quite the way you'd expect...”

John McNally recommends, “*Staggerford* by Jon Hassler (first published in 1977). Set in North Dakota and Minnesota, Hassler's work isn't as well known outside the Midwest or the Great Plains, but if you like Richard Russo's novels, you'll like Hassler's, which capture small-town America as well as, if not better than, any other contemporary writer. I also recommend his novel *Grand Opening*.”

Wayne King recommends Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*, noting the controversy it has caused within religious and historical organizations, but he reminds us that, “Though great fun, the book is a bit kinky; even the title is askew, as his name was Leonardo, the Da Vinci bit being a reference to his provenance—sort of like referring to Wayne King of Winston-Salem as ‘My old pal Winston.’”

For a more serious summer read, King recommends *Founding Brothers*, by Joseph J. Ellis.

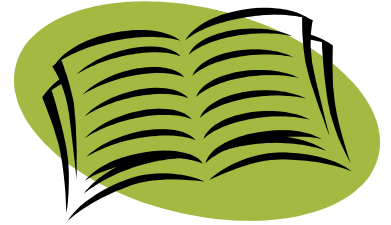
Susan Bussey recommends Jonathon Franzen's *The Corrections*. “Forget all the Oprah hoopla,” she says. “The book is compelling, funny, and disturbing.”

The best book Dean Franco read all year was, “Jose Saramago's *The Cave*. This novel, by the Portuguese Nobel Prize winner, is as intimate as a whisper in your ear, with some disturbing Foucaultian allegories of reality that will leave you paranoid about your local mall (and rightly so).

“Runner-up favorites include Zadie Smith's novel *Autograph Man*, which should ‘close the book’ on pop-Kabbalism, and Andrea Barrett's collection of stories, *Ship Fever* (literature for the science minded, science for the lit lovers).”

Department chair Dr. Gale Sigal would “like to recommend Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* for poetry lovers or those interested in the legends of King Arthur as a great summer read, and Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* as an interesting and fun historical novel set in 12th century England.”

Mary DeShazer suggests, “Ian McEwan's novel *Atonement*, and I challenge English majors who've read Jane Austen to find the connections to *Northanger Abbey* beyond the obvious one in the epigraph.”



*His name was Leonardo, the Da Vinci bit being a reference to his provenance—sort of like referring to Wayne King of Winston-Salem as ‘My old pal Winston.’ -Wayne King*





**Pro Humanitate**

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We would love to hear from you, too!  
Let us know about your recent accomplishments and developments by contacting us at

**[english@wfu.edu](mailto:english@wfu.edu)**

**English Department Newsletter**

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We also welcome comments and suggestions for the newsletter.

Don't forget to include your full name and graduation year!