



## In This Issue:

<i>Viticulture Shock: Jane Mead Returns</i>	1,2
<i>A Word from the Department Chair</i>	2
<i>New Classes Offered</i>	3
<i>Still Making Strides: Dr. Erica Still Joins Faculty</i>	4
<i>What Can You Do With An English Major?</i>	4,5
<i>Sigma Tau Delta: New Members</i>	5
<i>Alumni Updates</i>	6

## Viticulture Shock

Poet Jane Mead Returns to Wake Forest

By Brett Noble

This dawn I walked  
 the red mud, looking  
 for something I could know  
 would never leave me—  
 out through the vineyard  
 where my father tempts life  
 from dirt to wine in a habit  
 of seasons stronger than love.  
 Setting my palms into the mud  
 at the base of a gnarled vine  
 I pressed them together  
 and whispered "speak."



-Excerpt from "Where the Zinfandel Pass Their Seasons in Mute Rows" (1996)

It was a weighty decision for Jane Mead to leave her post as Wake Forest's poet-in-residence and take over Mead Ranch Vineyards following her father's death. Not only had she established herself as a notable figure within the poetry community, but the self-admitted introvert also had emerged from her shell to truly cherish the relationships with her students and faculty.

"[Leaving Wake Forest] wasn't something I just knew I wanted to do, nor was it something I did simply out of obligation," said Mead, speaking from her home phone on her Napa Valley vineyard. "I was very wary at first because I felt like my life was pretty well off in North Carolina. I didn't

leave lightly."

Departing the comfort and security of the English Department while she was still on her Guggenheim Fellowship, Mead moved cross country to live next door to her sister, Parry, in California to run the zinfandel and cabernet vineyard that has been in her family since 1916. The vineyard is also the source of inspiration for her first poetry book, *The Lord and the General Din of the World*. With no knowledge of business beyond her undergraduate degree in Economics, and even less familiarity in the field of viticulture, she entered her new profession with many uncertainties. However, since moving to the ranch in 2004, she has

*(Continued on page 2)*



# A Word From the Department Chair



Greetings. I hope that all of you are having a happy spring. I'm pleased to announce that Claudia Kairoff will be the new chair of English starting next year. I know that Claudia will make an excellent chair. Please join me in welcoming her to this position. As usual, also please let us know what you're up to. We're always happy to hear from our former students.  
- Dr. Eric Wilson, Chair and Professor of English

## **"JANE MEAD"** *(Continued from page 1)*

learned to manage the chaos of running a business, saying candidly, "It's been a learning experience for all of us."

Despite her new worries about night-dusting, sulphering the vines, or the price of diesel, she still finds time to teach, having recently taught a poetry writing class to seventh graders. She also looks forward to coming back to Wake Forest every February and teaching an intensive poetry writing workshop.

"I miss the conversation and interaction [of teaching]," she said. "The good thing about teaching is that it makes you think; it's one of the things that keeps you intellectually awake and alive. I miss the batting around of ideas. I miss watching people learn, undergraduates in particular. They have an ability to just take off that's incredible to see."

Unable to abandon her passion, she continues to write poetry, having rented a quiet office ten minutes away from the ranch to escape the constant action. Her tone, which has changed from her days at Wake, perhaps due to the changes in her life, will be reflected in her third full-length poetry book, tentatively titled *By Reason of Light*.

"When I first got [to the vineyard] it was

really hard to write because it was so busy and I was overwhelmed. When I started writing again after that, things were different. There were more images in my poems because there were more images in my day. For reasons that I don't understand, my lines have gotten a lot longer; Perhaps it has to do with hearing things differently."

To transition from poetry to farming seems like a complete turnaround, but Mead has found a comforting source of overlap between the two. She laughingly states the similarities, saying, "Well, the late gratification. I kind of joke but really I think that they're both really about slow development of the fruits of the labor. My poems gestate for a long time; they don't just happen, they grow. That's true with the vineyard as well. There's a sense of things happening slowly over time which speaks to the creed of process."

In her poem, "Where the Zinfandel Pass Their Seasons in Mute Rows," she looks to the red mud of the vineyard for something she knew would never leave her. She found what she was looking for in the soil of Mead Ranch Vineyard, but continues to look back tenderly upon her time spent at Wake Forest, and now looks forward to every February.

*"My poems gestate for a long time; they don't just happen, they grow. That's true with the vineyard as well. There's a sense of things happening slowly over time which speaks to the creed of process."*

*-Jane Mead*

# Divisionals Now More Diverse

## New Courses Added to English Curriculum

By Whitney Tritt

More writing and less reading seems to be the result of the recently reconstructed English divisional classes. Starting with next year's freshman class, English requirements will change in response to concerns from both students and faculty. The new changes will give students smaller classes, more writing intensive experience and will allow professors more flexibility in their course creations.

Currently, all students are required to pick two classes from the three divisions of American, British, and foreign literature. Next year, students will only have to choose one.

Anne Boyle, director of the core curriculum in the English Department, explained in an article in the *Old Gold and Black* that "even before the curriculum changes came about we surveyed students in divisional courses and they thought in English 160 (Intro. To British Literature) and 170 (Intro. to American Literature), there was too much reading and not enough reading in-depth."

The solution? **English 150**, which will teach literature as a basis for encountering the world. The course, called *Literature Interprets the World*, will aim for a variety of literature, including a range of authors, genres, countries of origin, or periods. Its wide potential will give professors the ability to tailor the course to their specialties and will give all students a solid overview of literature to support their Liberal Arts education. Its breadth makes it a great option for non-majors as well as potential English majors; and if students decide to major in English after taking 150, they

will not have to take another divisional.

In addition to an English 150 overview class, English 165 and English 175 will be reworked and **English 185** will be added to the curriculum. English 165 and English 175, which are advanced versions of Introduction to British Literature and Introduction to American Literature respectively, will both become more writing intensive seminars. And in line with English 150, the new English 185, Global Literature, will represent different nationalities, periods and genres in a writing intensive seminar format.

Finally, **English 190**, Literary Genres, will be added. This course will help to broaden options for students on a divisional level. The English Department has drafted five options of classes that could fall under English 190: Studies in Genres, Poetry, Dramatic Literature, Fiction, and The Epic. All are seminar based and writing intensive, as the department feels that students need more writing practice than can be managed in the 160 and 170 classes. They are also designed to be smaller classes, with more intensive study of fewer authors and more writing practice.

All classes will cap at 18 students and address the needs of students and faculty. "We tried to think not about what students wanted or needed 20 or 30 years ago but what they need now and about hiring new faculty," Boyle said.

And with a total of 12 new sections opening next fall, it will be difficult for students to choose just one of these truly diverse options.



### *New Classes:*

**English 150:**  
*Literature Interprets the World*

**English 185:**  
*Global Literature*

**English 190:**  
*Literary Genres*

### CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE:



Brett Noble



Editor:  
Whitney Tritt



Design:  
Whitney Archer



# Still Making Strides

## Dr. Still Joins the Faculty

By Whitney Tritt



Moving all the way from University of Iowa in Iowa City, soon to be Dr. Erica Still will join the English Department faculty this fall. With a specialization in African American Literature and a comparative focus in South African literature, Still will teach African American Fiction and a Writing Seminar next semester.

Still earned her undergraduate degree from Temple University in Philadelphia, a school that she describes as ‘urban’ compared to the more ‘traditional’ feel of Wake Forest campus. “I think students at Wake Forest have that same, if not greater, level of opportunity and support (that I had at Temple), which is wonderful,” Still notes.

Upon graduation from Temple University, Still began graduate school at the University of Iowa, where she has been for the last eight years. She taught for several years as a graduate student and did all of her coursework there. But for the last year, she has finished up her dissertation on trauma in the African American and South African novel at Dartmouth College through the Thurgood Marshall Dissertation Fellowship. She will complete her Ph.D. in May.

Still, who has known she’s wanted to teach for her entire life, sites two important les-

sons she’s learned as a student that will help with her ongoing work in the classroom. She said, “Asking good questions is an incredibly valuable skill, and being willing to engage honestly with people and ideas makes all kinds of learning possible.”

Both the faculty and students at Wake Forest excited her during the recruitment process. “I appreciated the commitment to ongoing scholarship and attentive teaching that so many of the faculty exhibited,” she said. “And I really enjoyed the students I had a chance to interact with in the classroom—they made me eager to get back to teaching.”

As for what she hopes to accomplish as a professor, she said, “Because I’ve benefited so much from professors who had a deep commitment to the work they do—in the classroom and in the discipline at large—I hope to follow in their footsteps. I think African American literature is a rich resource for provoking thought and conversation, and I want to offer classes that will foster real engagement with it.”

In conclusion, Still says this: “I pay attention to literature because it helps me think about life, and I look forward to participating in that kind of reflection—in a variety of ways—with students as well as my new colleagues.”

*“I think African American literature is a rich resource for provoking thought and conversation, and I want to offer classes that will foster real engagement with it.”*

*-Dr. Still*

## WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH AN ENGLISH MAJOR?

According to recorded careers from the 2005 and 2006 graduating classes, an English degree can take you anywhere from Cambridge, Massachusetts to Oxford, England. Recent graduates are doing all kinds of jobs with their recent Wake Forest degrees.

The following are some of the most unusual statistics recorded by Wake Forest Career Services:

Close to 15% of the English majors surveyed are currently working as teachers teaching everything from English to Latin and Art to Spanish. Almost half of these are in the Teach for America program.

*(Continued on page 5)*

## "English Major" (Continued from page 4)



Close to a third went to graduate school; of that third, 10% are in law school, and 5% are pursuing a Master or Graduate Degree in English.

One English major is a Rhodes Scholar studying literature in Oxford, England.



Almost a third are still living in North Carolina, and 13% of that third are still either working or in graduate school at Wake Forest.

7% are living outside of the United States—including Costa Rica, France, England, and Scotland.



Some of the most unusual paths include:

- an anatomy and neurobiology graduate student at Virginia Commonwealth University
- a Sports Copy Editor at *Press of Atlantic City*
- a New Jersey Nets financial assistant
- a Tour Consultant at EE Education Tour
- a Barista at Starbucks

## SPOTLIGHT: SIGMA TAU DELTA

**What is Sigma Tau Delta?** Sigma Tau Delta is the nationally-recognized English Honor Society for English students of demonstrated high achievement

**Mission Statement of the Wake Forest Chapter:** We, the members of Sigma Tau Delta National English Honor Society at Wake Forest University, believe that an academic society within the English Department is beneficial to our intellectual development. The purpose of Sigma Tau Delta is to recognize and encourage scholastic achievement in the field of English, to promote closer relationships between students and faculty, to develop increased awareness and contact among interested parties at Wake Forest University. For these purposes, we ordain and establish this constitution.

### New Members, Spring 2007 (Juniors graduating in 2008):



Ashley Smith



Lane Lassiter



Elizabeth Miller



Bethany Chafin



Lauren Calabria



Darren Lindamood



Whitney Tritt

*"This semester our main activity is planning an end-of-year awards banquet. It will be a dinner held close to the end of classes to honor the winners of the several awards that the department gives out to upper- and lower-division students every year. The event will also serve to recognize senior English majors and department faculty."*

*-Sigma Tau Delta  
President, Kate Flynn*



# ALUMNI UPDATES

1940s

**William S. Clarke** ('49) recently published a 474-page, hard-cover book, *IN SEARCH OF DAEDALUS, Recollections of a Fighter Pilot*. It may be purchased online at [lulu.com](http://lulu.com).

1960s

**Jane Greer Hill** ('61) retired in 2004 after teaching kindergarten for 15 years and first grade for 14 years.

**Rachel Floyed Harjes** ('66) is in a clinical psychology master's program training to be a therapist. Previously, she worked with and taught about computers.

**William E. Ray** ('66) is Chief Development Officer for The Parkinson's Institute in Sunnyvale, California.

**T.Y. (Tommy) Baker** ('67) served as a pilot in the Navy and in the late 70s, began a business in export trading, sending various food items to clients overseas.

**Susan Moore** ('68) has recently obtained a degree in library science. After teaching English for 19 years at South Stokes High School, she is currently working as the high school library media coordinator at Ronald Reagan High School in Pfafftown, North Carolina.

1970s

**Sylvia Helms** ('71) has taught English for 27 years. She also received a *Masters in English in Education* from University of North Carolina at Charlotte and a Specialist Degree in Media and Technology from Georgia State. She is married to **Larry Helms** ('71 MA '75) who received his second masters from Southern Seminary in 1987. He now serves as Chaplain over a multi-denominational congregation of 1,100 in Big Canoe, GA. They have three children and three grandchildren.

**Dorothy "Dottie" Quincy Gooding Whitney** ('74) has just completed a memoir about her life as an estranged identical twin. She is also doing research for another book, a biography about Carleen Maley Hutchins, a 95-year old female violin-maker. She formerly spent 14 years with *Boston Globe New Hampshire Weekly* as an arts journalist and full-time freelance correspondent.

1980s

**J. Michael Kilby** ('86) continues to work as an Associate Professor of Medicine at University of Alabama at Birmingham. He also serves as Medical Director of the HIV Clinic and Principal Investigator in research grants related to acute HIV infec-

tion and treatment strategies.

**Ric Roberts** ('89) is the bandleader of the band, the 33 and a third. His solo CD, "Maximum Karma Power," will be released soon, and he is currently selling a book of selected lyrics in his electronic store on his new website: [www.the33andathird.com](http://www.the33andathird.com).

1990s

**Steve Curnutte** ('91) recently started a company called HotFacuet, LLC which focuses on identifying, refining, developing, and launching new businesses. He also recently started Finworth Partners, LLC, a lending company that focuses on the high-end mortgage market in Tennessee and Florida. He spent a number of years as a singer-songwriter after graduation, but he now focuses on his businesses and lives in Nashville, with his wife and three sons.

**Brad Hipps** ('93) is in his third year at the University of Houston's Creative Writing Program, seeking an MFA in Fiction.

2000s

**Brandi Bingham Kellett** ('00) is finishing her course work for a Ph.D. at the University of Miami. She is pursuing teaching lists in 19<sup>th</sup> Century American Literature and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Caribbean Literature.

**Karen Roberts McNamara** ('01) will complete her Master's Degree in Communication, Culture & Technology from Georgetown University in May.

**Autumn McClurg Miller** ('04) works from home and has two sons, four-year old Darren and one-year old Benjamin.

**Jenny Billings** ('06) is working as a 9<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher at North Mecklenburg High School in Charlotte, NC. She is also working on obtaining her teaching license online through the University of Phoenix and is attending graduate school at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte for her masters in English.

**Rob Jackson** ('06) is a volunteer English teacher in Patagonia, Chile, through the English Open Doors program, sponsored by the Chilean Ministries of Education and the United Nations. He worked as a bus driver through March.

**Georgeanna Smith** ('06) is working as an assistant account executive with Edelman Public Relations. This position focuses on developing national PR outreach programs in the Consumer Food and Nutrition practice.

English Department  
P.O. Box 7365  
Reynolds Station  
Winston-Salem, NC  
27109