



ENGLISH NEWSLETTER

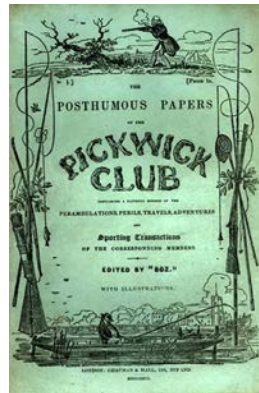


SPRING 2013 UNC CHARLOTTE

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CELEBRATING DICKENS AT 200

On Tuesday Feb. 7, 2012 the literary world celebrated the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Dickens, perhaps the most prolific author in the English language. Dickens completed 14 major novels and was working, at the time of his death, on *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870) which has intrigued scholars for over a century.

Dickens's novellas and short stories, including *A Christmas Carol* (1843) and *Sketches by Boz* (1836), are no less famous than his major works. What's more, Dickens published his novels in the very magazines he also edited including *Master Humphrey's Clock*, *Bentley's Miscellany*, and *Household Words* (the name of which comes from Shakespeare's Henry V: "Familiar in his mouth as household words"). Dickens also wrote hundreds of articles and essays for his magazines, many of which advocated for health care, prison, and social reform. He also wrote and acted in plays, traveled to America twice and to the continent frequently, performed readings, and entertained extravagantly. His pace was, in a word, dizzying!

Always an advocate for the underdog, Dickens never forgot the financial reversals that put his father into debtors' prison, and which required the 12-year-old Dickens to take an undistinguished position at Warren's Boot Blacking Company on the Strand. (cont. on p. 6)

"No one who can read, ever looks at a book, even unopened on a shelf, like one who cannot."

-Dickens *Our Mutual Friend* (1865)



A 19th Century Printing Press

Recent essays by Profs
JuliAnna Ávila (above) &
Elizabeth Miller (below).



CHAIR'S MESSAGE



While reading the articles and announcements in this issue of the *English Newsletter*, I noticed a theme of "engagement" running throughout the entire content. As the article about the 200th anniversary of Charles Dickens's birth makes clear, Dickens engaged his contemporaries in a very active way. He drew the public's attention to social problems. He encouraged his readers to care about the fates of the homeless, the impoverished, and the seemingly powerless people who populated London's back streets. Through his fiction and his journalistic publications, Dickens provided us with the perfect example of a writer who took community engagement to heart. Those of us who are fortunate enough to be associated with UNC Charlotte's English Department are not likely to have our 200th birthdays celebrated around the world, but we share Dickens's commitment to community engagement.

Henry Doss tells an inspiring story of his connections to the English Department, starting as a student during the 1970s and continuing to his present position as the Executive in Residence for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. He provides an ideal example of how a business executive can engage the academic community in ways that benefit both sides of the equation.

The story about our English Learning Community focuses on students who are just starting relationship with the English Department. These first-year students joined our Learning Community largely because of their interest in English as a discipline, but through their involvement in our Learning Community they are becoming engaged in the life of our department. They are also becoming engaged in the larger community through their participation in cultural events, such as attending the Renaissance Festival.

The theme of community engagement also runs through many of the shorter news stories and announcements. One of these news bulletins, for example, is about Dr. Jen Munroe and Dr. Liz Miller's participation in a research project funded by the National Science Foundation. This project deals with creating socially sustainable communities. It is not often that English professors receive funding from the National Science Foundation. The announcement about Dr. Deborah Bosley's retirement mentions her ongoing engagement with government agencies, non-profits, and corporations to improve their written documents in order to make them more understandable to the general public. Another announcement deals with the English Department's sponsorship of a literacy event called a Seuss-a-Thon, held at a local bookstore. This event was tied to Read Across America Day.

As this issue of the *English Newsletter* demonstrates, UNC Charlotte's English Department is not a sequestered academic silo. We are a vibrant department that engages in the intellectual, cultural and social life of the Charlotte community and beyond. ☺

--Mark West

FACULTY NEWS

Prof. Deborah Bosley Retiring

After 25 years of research, publications, and teaching technical communication to undergraduates and graduate students, **Dr. Deborah S. Bosley** is retiring effective June 30, 2013.



However, because she wants to stay in touch with her former students, please feel free to contact her at her university email address (dsbosley@uncc.edu).

During her retirement, as owner of The Plain Language Group, she will be working with government agencies, non-profits, and corporations to help them make complex information easy for the public to understand and use. If you are interested, visit her at www.theplainlanguagegroup.com.

Meanwhile, she wants all her former students to know that teaching them, knowing them, and helping them has been the joy of her life. ☺

ALUMNI NEWS

Bryan Nakawaki (MA 2011) has been accepted into Purdue University's doctoral program with full funding. Bryan plans on pursuing research in the area of Shakespeare and performance.

MA student **Justin Hampton** (MA 2011) was accepted into the doctoral program at University of Kansas with 5 years of funding. Justin will be focusing on 19th and 20th Century British literature.

Krupal Amin (MA 2012) is currently pursuing a doctorate at Ohio State University.

Tom Maxim (BA 2010) is completing his Law Degree at Boston's Northeastern University.

Emily Williams (MA 2012) is now Adjunct Lecturer of English at Belmont Abbey College.

Sam Nicolosi (BA 2008) is working toward his doctorate in early modern literature at CUNY Grad Center. He is an adjunct instructor at Queen's College in Flushing, NY.

ALUMNI REFLECTIONS

UNCC Beginnings: A Reflection

By Henry Doss (B.A. '77)



Much has changed at UNCC since I graduated with a degree in English Literature in 1977. More buildings. Less parking. Many, many more students. More graduate degrees. Doctoral programs. Football! More traffic. Comparing the UNCC of today to the UNCC of 1977. . . well, there's just not much comparison.

Except for one thing.

The constant, the thing that was the UNCC experience back then, and is still the UNCC experience now is this: "Possibility."

I came to UNCC just like many others . . . a transfer student, living off campus. Uncertain about who or what I wanted to be. Anxious about my ability to do well in a college setting. And, really, not very well prepared to do college work. I arrived on a campus that was virtually new, with lots of newly hired professors who were building departments, building disciplines and ready to engage with students. As luck would have it, I had landed in exactly the right place, at the right time.

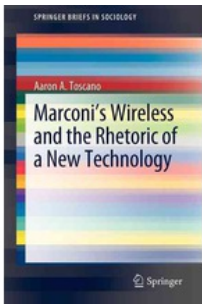
I toyed with the idea different majors, including psychology, history and – at one point, pre-med – before finally settling on English. The truth is, like so many others, I wasn't really sure what I was going to "do" with a degree in English, and, even more honestly, I didn't really think about it very much. I just had the sense that literature and writing and reading lots of books seemed like a good idea. So, that's what I set out to do.

I think in the mid 70s, at UNCC and most other colleges, there was less of an insistent notion of "get ready for a job" and more of a sense of "settle in to learn." That may have been just my take on how things seemed at the time to me, but in thinking back to the UNCC of 1977, the paradigm seemed to be "learn." At least in my case, that turned out to be a good thing.

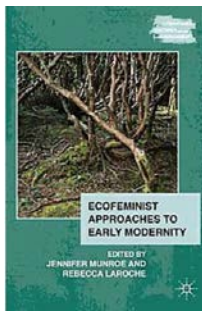
In the midst of lots of reading, and writing papers, and attending lectures, there was always a little something missing. Something that wasn't apparent or obvious, but nevertheless . . . missing. And I can remember exactly where and when I found this missing thing. (Cont. on P. 4)



NEW BOOKS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



Aaron Toscano's *Marconi's Wireless and the Rhetoric of a New Technology* (Springer, 2012) examines the discourse surrounding Marconi's creation of the "wireless."



Edited by **Jennifer Munroe** & Rebecca LaRoche (U. Colorado), *Ecofeminist Approaches to Early Modernity* (Palgrave, 2011) explores ways that early modern English women interacted with their natural surroundings.

The Golem: A Halloween Event

The English Department's Halloween showing of Paul Wegener's classic horror film *The Golem* (1920) was a success. Musical accompaniment for the film was provided by the extraordinary pianist **Ethan Uslan**.

Students wore costumes, and prizes were awarded. 📖



In March, 2013, Prof. **Mark West** organized **Suess-a-thon**, a celebration of the works of Theodor Geisel on what would have been Geisel's 109th

birthday! The event took place at Park Road Books. 📖

(Henry Doss, cont. from P. 3)

I walked into advanced expository writing, a class taught by then faculty member **Sam Watson** . . . I thought the class would be fairly easy. (Like many English majors, I had an outsized view of my own ability to write. I expected an easy A. I got a very challenging B.) In any event, for the first time I could remember, I was in an environment where what I said and wrote was important. In that class, it was assumed that if you were speaking or writing, then you were doing so with intent. And whatever you said or wrote was going to be taken seriously. For me, this was transformative.

In reading these words, it seems like such a small thing. But it wasn't. It was one of the most important parts of my UNCC experience. In essence, the class introduced me to the notion of being accountable for the words I wrote and the words I spoke. And it introduced me to the power of words for good and ill. Papers become not "things to write," but opportunities to explore ideas responsibly, to share the "best of my thinking," and to write "into" something, rather than "about" something. In many ways, this experience was my introduction to learning "how to think." Every class I took afterwards, and every subsequent occasion I had to write or speak was "better" because of what I learned in that class. I had a great time.

Like every other graduate, I left college, went to work, raised a family, and lived my life. Along the way, I had more than my share of good luck and fortune, and more than my share of adventures and interesting twists and turns. I've had several great careers, as a teacher, as a banker, and as a venture capitalist. I've worked in some exotic locations around the world. But the opportunity to do all these things *really* began back in the 70s, on this campus, in Garinger, Denny, and Winningham, where I acquired the one thing that contributed to any success I've had in life: an abiding sense of the power of words, of stories, and of language.

The UNCC I knew as a young(er) man was a place for inquiry, self-discovery and exploration. It was a place of learning. Today's UNCC is bigger, has lots more faculty and degrees and students and buildings. But it is still here for one principal reason. As a place to learn.

I've recently had the good fortune to return to UNCC, as both a graduate student in Liberal Studies, and as the volunteer Executive in Residence for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. As a student, I'm finding the same experience I had 35 years ago . . . I'm presented simply with an opportunity to learn.

And if there's anything that has made a difference in my life, that's it. 📖



FACULTY NEWS

Jennifer Munroe and **Elizabeth Miller** are two of five Principal Investigators (PIs) from UNC Charlotte who received an NSF-funded grant supporting the **Integrated Network for Social Sustainability: Concepts, Language, and Assessment (INSS)**. The grant (over \$700,000) supports a variety of in-person and virtual conferences over the five-year duration of the project. These conferences bring together academics and practitioners from the public and private sectors to better define social sustainability, which, along with environmental and economic factors, is critical in decision-making related to development. Despite many shared values, academics, professionals and policymakers often hold varying perspectives about what social sustainability is. For that reason, INSS is committed to creating an active network of members who will communicate across disciplinary boundaries to create a working definition that researchers and practitioners can use. Munroe's involvement in the project developed from her research in ecofeminism, literature, and social justice. Miller brings her profound experience with discourse analysis. She coordinates the linguistic analysis of network communications, with a focus on the developing conceptualizations of social sustainability articulated among network members. ☞



Jennifer Munroe



Elizabeth Miller

STUDENT EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES



ELC students & faculty enjoying Charlotte's Renaissance Faire. (Front from left) Stephanie Billman, Megan Ponzo, Katherine Fletcher and Tiffany Morin (ELC Coordinator). (Back from left) Jarred Batchelor Hamilton, and Sarah Minslow.

This Fall, the **English Learning Community** visited the Renaissance Festival. Since reading Andrew Hartley's *Macbeth: A Novel* this semester, they have been interested in the time of Shakespeare and were especially interested to see some stage productions. While visiting, they were thrilled to be whisked back in time as they dressed up, rode swings, snacked on turkey legs, cheered on a joust, and took in some stage shows. One student even joined the show on stage with the hypnotist. While he does not remember his very memorable performance, the community will never forget it, and fortunately, he got a video of his "performance." Another student tried his hand at the strongman competition. The day was completed by a photo-op which included a fashion pic in the milliner's shop (above). By the time the students returned to campus, they were exhausted, but elated. ELC recruitment is beginning for the 2013-2014 year, so contact **Tiffany Morin** (tamorin@uncc.edu) if you're interested in the ELC! ☞



SIGMA TAU DELTA
INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH HONOR SOCIETY

UNCC's Beta Sigma chapter of $\Sigma\tau\Delta$, directed by **Aimee Parkison**, will celebrate the induction of 18 new members at the English Department's *Student Award Ceremony* on April 12, 2013 (12:30 p.m.) in Atkins Library's Dale Halton Reading Room. We are delighted that Griffin Anderson, Operations Manager at Gray's Bookstore and former President of $\Sigma\tau\Delta$, at USF, partnered with our chapter to donate 5% of the members' purchases at Grays back to the group. Recently, $\Sigma\tau\Delta$ students worked with the ELC to collect money and toys for the Native American Holiday Toy Drive organized by **Susan Gardner**. This year's $\Sigma\tau\Delta$ officers are: Ariel Duke (President), Anjelica Borja (Vice President), Breannon Wills (Secretary), Laura Mlecz and Angela McNair (Co-Treasurers). ☞



NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

The **English Graduate Student Association** organized its 13th Annual Conference, titled "The Shape of



Things." The Plenary speakers were Dr. Elaine Chun (Linguistics, South Carolina) and the playwright, Dr. John Tuttle, who teaches at Francis Marion University.

Over 20 papers were delivered by students

from UNC Charlotte and elsewhere. The conference was organized by Kimberly Turner, Megan Weaver, Laura Erturk, Ben Dudley, Kelly Bladl, Ellen Moore, and Scott Shores. 📧

Support English

The impressive activities of students and faculty in the Department of English can always benefit from your generosity! Please consider making a gift to the Department in order to support student awards and travel! 📧

GIVE NOW

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CONTACT

(Dickens, cont. from P. 1)

The memory of that experience resonates throughout all of his work, but emerges most vividly in the description of Murdstone and Grinby's warehouse in *David Copperfield*. The actual factory, Dickens recalls was:

a crazy, tumbledown old house, abutting of course on the river, and literally overrun with rats. Its wainscotted rooms and its rotten floors and staircase, and the old grey rats swarming down in the cellars, and the sound of their squeaking and scuffling coming up the stairs at all times, and the dirt and decay of the place, rise visibly up before me, as if I were there again.

Searing as the memory of factory work was, the elder Dickens lived in a lavish manner and constantly found himself in need of cash. This in spite of the famous principle advocated by the inimitable Wilkins Micawber (working under the thumb despicable Uriah Heep):

Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen pounds nineteen and six: *result happiness*. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six: *result misery*.

Had Dickens been able to benefit financially from the many films derived from his work, to say nothing of the successful stage adaptations of *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*, he would have been delighted. As it was, he was constantly frustrated in his own time by the dozens of plagiarized version of his novels, as well as by unauthorized dramatic productions based on his work, and not least, by the absence of copyright protection in America. Dickens advocated strenuously for American copyright laws, often annoying his American audiences, but it wasn't until 1896 that Congress approved an international copyright agreement.

In addition to the standard biographies of Dickens (by his friend John Forster and later by Fred Kaplan), there are new biographies worth reading by Michael Slater, Claire Tomalin, Simon Callow, and Robert Douglas-Fairhurst.

Dickens's remarkable wit and humor, to say nothing of his social convictions, are worth rediscovering. To commemorate Dickens, UNC Charlotte students read novels ranging from *Pickwick Papers* to *Bleak House* as part of a graduate seminar in Dickens taught by **Alan Rauch**. 📖



Undergraduates (L) and Graduate Students (R) celebrating Dickens's 200th Birthday!



ALUMNI NEWS



Lisa Rubenson (BA '02, MA '09) won *National Public Radio's* Three-Minute Fiction contest with her story "Sorry for your Loss." The story, which was selected from over 4000 entries by renowned novelist Mona Simpson, will be published in the *Paris Review*.



Lisa Rubenson

In "Sorry for Your Loss," a woman named Christine leaves/erases a sequence of voice messages for her old boyfriend Nick whose mother recently died. Each attempt is more awkward than the next, and more revealing. The story, according to Simpson, "is funny at moments, and yet it's very strikingly yearning,"

You can read & listen to the story on NPR at: <http://www.npr.org/2013/03/09/173722517/sorry-for-your-loss>.

As a student, Rubenson, was widely admired by the faculty, and she returns the compliment by acknowledging the help and support of many UNC Charlotte English professors. In particular, she credits **Aaron Gwyn** and **Tony Jackson** for teaching her "about fiction writing and about the layers of narrative-- how to get inside of a story, see what it's doing, and let it teach you something."

Lisa recently established a small freelance business called "Old School Communications" www.oldschoolcommunications.net, which provides writing, editing and marketing services to a variety of clients. "I also spend as much time as I can writing fiction and personal essays," she says. "I like helping people find their voice -- whether it's a client who has a message to share, or a character caught up in a story."

For Lisa, it's also true that her hard work has deservedly earned her a place in the national spotlight. 📖

FACULTY NEWS



UNC Charlotte recently hosted the 1st **AMPRA Conference** (International Conference of the Pragmatics of the Americas Association) and the Vth International Intercultural Pragmatics conference. Professor **Pilar Blitvich**, an internationally renowned scholar in pragmatics, was the conference planner. For those of you who may not be familiar with it, pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics that focuses on how discourse is produced and interpreted in context.



Pilar Blitvich

Those who do pragmatics generally consider themselves discourse analysts. The many branches of pragmatics --cognitive, social, intercultural, etc.-- have thousands of practitioners all over the world. However, prior to AMPRA's inception, there was no established conference on pragmatics in the Americas.

Pilar also serves as the co-editor of **The Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict** which she founded along with Prof. Istvan Kecskes, who is a linguistics professor at The University at Albany. The journal, only just recently launched, is published by John Benjamins Publishing Company, a premiere press in language and linguistics, which is based in Amsterdam. 📖



Brown All Over, a new book for children and families by **Janaka Lewis** (whose scholarship focuses on African American literature of the nineteenth century), is a celebration of colors, including the colors of our skin. It feature a young boy's attempt to use all of the colors in his crayon box with the help of his family members and his realization that he is a part of the color spectrum too. 📖



FULL-TIME ENGLISH FACULTY

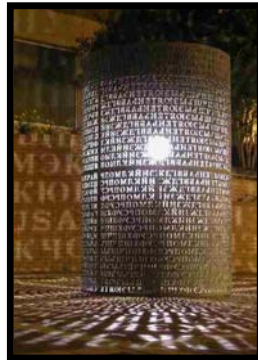
Ávila, JuliAnna, Ph.D.
Blitvich, Pilar, Ph.D.
Bosley, Deborah, D.A.
Brannon, Lilian, Ed.D.
Connolly, Paula, Ph.D.
Davis, Boyd H., Ph.D.
Davis, Christopher, M.F.A.
Eckard, Paula, Ph.D.
Gargano, Elizabeth, Ph.D.
Gwyn, Aaron, Ph.D.
Jackson, Tony, Ph.D.
Knoblauch, Cy, Ph.D.
Leak, Jeffrey, Ph.D.
Lewis, Janaka, Ph.D.
Lunsford, Ron, Ph.D.
McGavran, Jim, Ph.D.
Melnikoff, Kirk, Ph.D.
Miller, Elizabeth R., Ph.D.
Morgan, Meg, Ph.D.
Moss, Anita, Ph.D.
Munroe, Jennifer A., Ph.D.
Parkison, Aimee, M.F.A.
Pereira, Malin, Ph.D.
Rauch, Alan, Ph.D.
Roeder, Rebecca, Ph.D.
Schmitz, Christine
Shealy, Daniel, Ph.D.
Socolovsky, Maya, Ph.D.
Thiede, Ralf, Ph.D.
Toscano, Aaron, Ph.D.

ADJUNCT FACULTY

Bright, Valerie, MA
Brockman, Sonya, MA
Camarago, Jessica, MA
Gardner, Susan, Ph.D.
Gatlin, Leon, Ph.D.
Hassell, Myles, MA
Huddleston - Edwards, Sandra, MA
Minslow, Sarah, PhD
Morin, Tiffany, MA

ENGLISH STAFF

Alston, Monica
Mussington, Jennie
Williams, Angie



"The Cyrillic Projector," an encrypted sculpture by Jim Sanborn outside of Fretwell.

ALUMNI REFLECTIONS

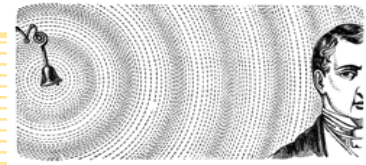
Julie Dyke Ford (MA '08)

Associate Professor of Technical Communication
New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology

I could not have asked for a better education than the one I received at UNC Charlotte. The coursework and hands-on projects prepared me extremely well for pursuing my doctorate in Rhetoric and Professional Communication at New Mexico State University (2001).



The TA training program at UNC Charlotte is, in my opinion, one of the best in the country, providing an ideal combination of individual tutoring experience, teaching experience, and close mentoring and invaluable feedback. In my current role as Associate Professor and Program Director of Technical Communication at New Mexico Tech, I refer to those lessons I learned as a TA frequently, modeling my teaching practices and administrative actions after the wonderful examples I observed at UNC Charlotte. As I move further along my own path in academia and set my sights towards achieving full professor status and serving as a leader in my campus community, I will continue to rely on the skills gained from Charlotte's MA program. 📖



LET US HEAR FROM YOU

UNC Charlotte's Department of English is eager to hear from you! Please don't hesitate to write to us with any news about you or with comments and suggestions about the Newsletter or our Website. You can contact us by calling or writing any of the faculty or staff in the department. The Newsletter is edited by Prof. Alan Rauch (arauch@uncc.edu). 📖

Alan Rauch © 2013



We are delighted to welcome **Sarah Minslow** as an adjunct faculty member. Sarah, who received her doctorate from the University of Newcastle in Australia, specializes in children's literature and in literature and human rights. She recently taught "War and Genocide" in

which her students participated in the project called "One Million Bones," a national art collective that increases awareness of victims of genocide and ongoing mass atrocities in our world. Sarah recently participated in the US Holocaust Memorial Museum's Silberman Seminar, which she has incorporated into her classes. Sarah will share more about the seminar in the next edition of the Newsletter. 📖