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When I imagined teaching English in West Africa, being asked this question didn’t come to mind. But, nevertheless, there I was, trying to make Shakespeare relevant to a classroom full of Sierra Leonean pre-teen girls.

Most of them walked over three miles that morning from their small subsistence-farming villages to attend school. They came barefoot carrying their black shoes in plastic bags to avoid getting them covered in dust along the road. Why should they care about some old white guy’s story of wealthy European merchants? They sat patiently, waiting for me to explain.

The challenges of my three-year Peace Corps service in Sierra Leone were unpredictable and varied. I lived without electricity or running water in a small town that was still recovering from the ravages of a 10-year rebel war. My assignment was at a girls’ vocational school, teaching Language Arts to 6th through 8th graders. In reality, I ended up teaching anything people would listen to and learning even more from anyone who had the patience to put up with the town “pumoi” (white person).

I worked under the umbrella of “education” but was not limited to a classroom. Rather than pigeon-holing assignments, Peace Corps’ brilliantly open scope allows volunteers to assist local people achieve their own goals. However, collaboration was key, and I was ineffective until I integrated into the community and learned their ways of life. If I couldn’t greet an elder properly, then the local NGO workers didn’t have time for my impromptu computer lessons. Why would business owners listen to my opinions on profit margins if I didn’t even know how to haggle in the market? And without a neatly-tied head scarf, I would never convince the city council to allow student interns in local offices.

My service reestablishing a library at the school had perhaps the greatest impact. We received an unsolicited donation of “outdated” school books from the U.K. After some convincing, the teachers agreed to allocate a classroom and some old shelves. Students were eager to hold a book in their hands for the first time in their lives. Students and
staff started a library club and debated what purpose, goals, and rules the library should have. We developed our own filing system based on our needs and the small number of books. It was very slow moving, and there were plenty of failures. Borrowing was a hard concept to instill in a culture that highly values gift giving. Lots of books were never returned, but at least the books were in the hands of eager children.

Inspired by the lessons and skills I learned at my school, I joined a literary initiative group in the capital city. We soon established a partnership with the African Library Project, an American-based non-profit. Since the partnership began in 2012, we helped start over 35 libraries and hope to finish 60 more this year. A culture of reading is taking root in Sierra Leone.

As current and former English students, we know the value of literature. It has the power to cross cultural lines and speak to the common struggles of humanity. You can share your passion and build your skill set by donating your time. Volunteer with Reading Partners or Trident Literacy, and read with local students. You can even help establish an African library by hosting an African Library Project book drive in your community. And I would be remiss if I didn’t promote the life enriching experience of Peace Corps service. Whatever you choose, use your talents cultivated at College of Charleston and have an impact on your world.

-- Meghan Welsh ‘09
New Faculty Interviews

As has been a tradition at Folio, this issue features interviews with our newest Assistant Professors on the completion of their first year at the College. I primed the pump for these interviews in last year's issue, by asking our new tenure-track colleagues—Colleen Glenn, Gary Jackson, and Anton Vander Zee—to say just a few words about their research and writing projects and what they were looking forward to in their new positions at the College. The following full-length interviews go into greater depth and, I hope, will give you a glimpse into the lives, personal and professional, of three dynamic teacher/scholars in the Department of English.

--Mike Duvall
Professor Glenn earned a BA in English from Ohio University (1999) and an MA in English with a Concentration in Film Studies (2005) from the University of Kentucky. In 2012, she earned a doctorate in English with a Specialization in Film Studies at Kentucky. She teaches courses in film and film history at the College, as well as first-year writing.
How was your summer?
Too fast! It flew by, like my first year did.

What did you do? Where did you go?
I had a wonderful family visit. My parents and my brothers and their wives and children all came to Charleston in June. We had a great week on Folly Beach.

I also spent a week in Los Angeles doing archival research at the Margaret Herrick Library of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. I was doing research on Jimmy Stewart.

Can you say a few things about your work on Jimmy Stewart?
It deals with Stewart's career when he comes back from WWII and starts taking on darker roles. Before the war, he had been mainly known for playing very earnest and sweet characters, as in Mr. Smith Goes to Washington and The Shop Around the Corner. And even when his roles had more of an edge, like in The Philadelphia Story, he still played pretty affable all-American young men. After the war, however, he makes several films that are flops, and he decides that he needs to toughen up. So he begins taking roles in westerns and in Hitchcock films, too. But what I find so fascinating about those roles is that he's playing tough characters, but he's hysterical; he's nervous; he's having nightmares; he's suffering, which makes for a very interesting conundrum on the screen.

I connect this to a lingering issue of war trauma with which the culture at the time is not dealing adequately. Stewart's roles tend to replicate, over and over, the same symptoms of what was then called “combat fatigue,” or what we now call PTSD, which are expressed in the dozen or so films after the war that actually deal explicitly with war trauma or John Huston's government-suppressed documentary, Let There be Light. My research offers new ways of reading Stewart and his movies, as well as sheds light on how PTSD was understood—and misunderstood—in the WWII era.

In LA, I was looking for materials related to his war service and particularly how the press and studios dealt with his induction, his service, and his return to Hollywood.

Did you do anything else in LA?
I spent a lot of time in traffic. But I love LA! The city is vibrant, and the San Gabriel mountains are just gorgeous.

I did get to the Getty Center and also went to the Griffith Park Observatory, which is that famous observatory from Rebel without a Cause. I tried to get my friend to act out the knife scene with me, but he didn't know what I was talking about. I was like, “Come on! You be Dennis Hopper!” I did my best angst-ridden James Dean impression, anyway.

You also went to Alaska this summer, right?
Yes. Alaska is a place I have always wanted to go, and I was able to make it happen this summer! I spent most of my time in the Anchorage area, but also made it to the Kenai peninsula and to Talkeetna. I did a lot of hiking—it was a great trip. Now, I'm trying to adjust back to the Charleston heat.

How would you say your first year at the College went?
I thought it went really well—it went by very quickly! I taught first year writing, Cinema: History and Criticism, an American cinema course focused on the myth of the road in American film, and a new course I called “Dreams and the Movies.”

In my film courses, I was impressed by students’ ability to analyze film in a sophisticated manner. We had great discussion days, even with challenging films like Spike Lee’s Do the Right Thing and Fernando Meirelles’s City of God. I noticed in my classes in the spring a kind of magic chemistry that you get sometimes; there was just a great atmosphere in those classes. I was particularly pleased with the short films and screenplays that my upper-level students produced for their final projects in the Dreams and Road Movies courses.

Are there subjects you have yet to teach that you would like to in the future?
I'd love to teach an auteur course or a course on movie stars, which would certainly fit well with my research interests.

I am also very interested in film exhibition, and I would be interested in teaching a course on that subject here. As consumers, we seldom think about the complex behind-the-scenes machinery (distribution, selection, etc.) that operates in order to bring films to screens. I've connected with the Terrace [Theater] and with Park Circle Film Society, and with some of the local film festivals, like the Charleston Film Festival, the Charleston International Film Festival, the Italian Film Festival, and I've been writing on film for the Charleston City Paper.
If I can make a few more of those kinds of connections, I think it would be cool to do design a course in which students are getting out into the town and getting some first-hand experience in back-of-the-house operations, even working at festivals. Last year, several of our film studies minors volunteered at the Italian Film Festival in the fall and the Charleston International Film Festival in the spring, and they loved it. Seeing them there, and their faces lighting up, made me feel that a course that was timed to coincide with one or more of the local festivals could be really great. It might work well for a May-term course.

**Tell me about the connection you made with Director Michael Apted and his campus visit back in the fall.**

My first assignment for the Charleston City Paper was, lucky me, to interview filmmaker Michael Apted (Gorillas in the Mist, the Up series, Coal Miner’s Daughter, Masters of Sex on Showtime), who was coming to town to shoot an episode of Reckless for CBS. Apted, who is extremely intelligent and very gracious, gave a great interview, and I later invited him to campus. John [Bruns] and I planned an event that included an on-campus screening of 56 Up [http://www.pbs.org/pov/56up/], the latest in his Up series and a QA afterwards. The event marked the film’s premiere in Charleston. We had a packed house; our students were excited to meet him, as were members of the community.

In the spring, a couple of other filmmakers came to campus to speak to the film club. One of the highlights was the visit from Michael Mayer, who was here for an event arranged by David Moscowitz (CoFC Film Studies and Department of Communication), which included a screening of Mayer’s Out in the Dark (2012). Mayer was extremely generous with his time and eager to speak to CoFC students. He spent an afternoon sitting at the cine-tern with our film club. Our film students love to talk to people in the business, and what may surprise you is that people in the business love to talk to them, too. I think it gives them a chance to give back and to have real, genuine conversations with fellow film lovers, with no agenda other than their shared passion for movies.

I’m big on “town and gown” events like these. That’s sort of my philosophy in terms of teaching, but also in terms of research and how I want to approach my career. There’s value in having our [faculty] voices out in the community and in the popular press, just as there is value in bringing non-academics onto campus to teach us what they know. I hope that the academy continues to evolve and to recognize the value in writing for and conversing with wider, more diverse audiences. I’ve been working recently on an academic piece on Mickey Rourke, but I would love to interview him and write a piece for a popular magazine like GQ, Esquire, or Vanity Fair. The simple truth is that more people will read it in the second type of publication.

**In your research, what else has your attention lately?**

I presented a paper this spring on the adult movie house era of the 1970s, when quite a few movie houses showed pornography in order to stay in business. It turns out that many small town, Main Street-type theaters that were struggling to stay in business in the late 1960s and through the ’70s turned to showing adult films because that was what would bring people in, while other theaters folded because the owners—local or elsewhere—refused to show such films or couldn’t, due to the public’s distaste for it.

A theater I know very well in Lexington, KY, the Kentucky Theater, has this kind of history, and it’s fascinating. For a few years, there were two theaters that sat side by side, one showing regular fare and one showing pornos. There are some funny stories related to that: people being seen leaving from the wrong theater, trying to pretend that they had not just seen Deep Throat or whatever it was. Pornography helped keep a lot of movie theaters alive, at least up until the rise of the home VCR. It’s an interesting and often-overlooked era in movie history as well as in the city. People know about it, but there’s not much writing about it.

**Can you tell me about the edited collection of articles that you are finishing up right now?**

It’s called Star Bodies and the Erotics of Suffering, and I am co-editing it with Rebecca Bell-Metereau (Texas State University, San Marcos). It’s an anthology of essays that deal with different film stars and how suffering functions in the roles they play, their star personae, and so on. Box office success is often equated with being able to produce and then maintain some kind of coherent, stable image over time, so what happens, we wanted to know, when stars undergo major bodily transformations in order to play roles, or they noticeably age, or perhaps get embroiled in a scandal that’s so dramatic that it fractures their star image? Our collection explores those fissures that are created when star images are disrupted. We have pieces on several stars, including Mickey Rourke, Joaquin Phoenix, Charlize Theron, Hilary Swank, Marilyn Monroe, Rita Hayworth, Rock

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Professor Jackson is the author of the 2009 Cave Canem Prize-Winning collection Missing You, Metropolis. His poems have also appeared in many literary journals, including Tin House, Calaloo, The Normal School, Tuesday, and The Laurel Review. He teaches courses in poetry-writing.
In Folio last year, you broke down your summer activities with great precision: “90% = moving, moving, moving; 10% = everything else.” Have those percentages changed? Have you settled in?

Totally settled in. Well, I shouldn’t say “totally,” but we’re pretty settled in, Lisa and I. I think we’ve unpacked everything we care to unpack. You know, the walls are still kind of bare: we don’t have as many pictures or things to make it feel like our home and less like just the place we sleep at.

So I think, percentage-wise, this summer would be 0% packing and moving, maybe 30% getting situated in South Carolina (we finally just got our drivers licenses; we’re getting stuff like that done), and for the rest: travel, entertaining out-of-town guests, writing and revising.

In early July, we made a trip to Kansas City, and then I immediately flew out to Murray State to teach and mentor students in a low-residency MFA program there.

I’ve lost track of our percentage count, but I would say about 35-40% of the summer I spent writing, and if not actually writing, then revising, or looking at the work of other writers. So what does that make it? 30% getting situated in SC; 35% traveling and entertaining guests; 35% writing and revising?

You also said last year that you were “crazy excited” to meet and teach poetry students at the College. I’d like to hear about how your teaching went this year.

"Crazy excited": yes, and I’ve been fortunate to teach students in the full range of the undergraduate program this year: intro, intermediate, and advanced. It was fun, and the students were great. But I’m still getting used to curriculum and what I can expect of students at the different levels.

In the upper division class, I had the students read a set of first books of poetry, which worked very well, especially since they [the students] are advanced and these are the kinds of books they might soon be working toward producing themselves. I tried to select a range of books, with different styles, voices, and authors from different backgrounds and regions. That worked really well, I think, because the students are not necessarily aware of the wide range of poetry out there from different places and from writers from various backgrounds, or even the range of what a poem can be about. Natalie Diaz, who is a Native American poet from the Southwest, is a good example. She writes not only about living on the rez, but also about her brother’s meth addiction. Students often react to her writing by saying, "I didn’t realize poems could be about things like that."

What challenges you in teaching?

Among other things, I have found repeatedly that students don’t trust their poems to do enough of the heavy lifting on their own. I think, if anything, they should trust the poem to do what the poem can do. A lot of students will add disclaimers that tell us how to think about the poem before we even get to it or they will explain, after the fact, that the poem is about this or that. I know that there are workshops that encourage that kind of dialogue, and I think it can be useful, but for me, I feel that “this is the poem you’re giving us: we’ll look at it, and we’ll tell you what we’re getting from it, or if we’re not getting anything, or if we’re confused.” I like to think of the poem as an object, and you have to trust that when it goes out into the world, it’s going to do what it’s supposed to do. Let the poem say what it’s going to say to different people, and don’t worry about it. If people come away with 20 different interpretations, if they are all valid, and you don’t mind them, then what does it matter?

If people hate your poem, which happens, but they hate it for reasons that you intended or hate it for reasons that actually make the poem more interesting, then that can be a good thing, too. I just feel that, across the board, when teaching poetry, it works best when the poems are allowed to do the work.

I’m also curious to know about your teaching in South Korea a couple years back.

In 2009, when Lisa and I were teaching as adjuncts at the University of New Mexico, somehow I got the idea of teaching overseas, which sounded like it could be interesting. We had a choice between teaching in two or three Asian countries, including Korea. Since I’m part Korean and it seemed like a good program to us, we went there, which is nuts when I think about it now. We sold most of our stuff, rented a small storage shed in Albuquerque, and moved all the essential stuff we were keeping there.

It was very difficult at first. For the training program, we had to do teaching demos and were graded on the spot. If you got a low grade, you didn’t get to move on, and if you didn’t pass, you didn’t get a visa: “good luck…”
One of our friends didn’t make it, but he was able to find another teaching gig in another program, and they sponsored his visa. Once we got in, we worked at a hagwon, which means “private school” in Korean. In fact, in the city of Anyang, where we were teaching, there was one street where all the private schools were located and which we called “Hagwon Alley.” Students (middle- to high-school age) came to our hagwon after they finished public school each day for supplemental instruction in a number of subjects, including English. They were in school from the morning until about 10 at night, so as you can imagine, we had some tired and grumpy students, but overall they were great.

The instruction was highly regimented, often all about teaching to the test for standardized exams. We taught reading and comprehension, and there was also a listening and note-taking class that we taught. In that class, students would listen to and take notes on lectures on American history, topics like the Indian Wars and Andrew Jackson.

Towards the end of our time there, Lisa and I got to teach accelerated classes, which were really fun, almost like college classes, but with kids. Lisa taught the advanced reading class, having students read anthropomorphic animal stories like Watership Down and Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH. I taught the advanced writing class, in which, among other things, I taught them how to write poems and short stories.

Did that experience of teaching in Korea affect your teaching when you got back home?

Yes. It seemed like such a rigid or simplistic structure in terms of how to teach composition: “this is how a paragraph works.” But when I got back, I realized how well it works to focus on some of the basic things, like what a topic sentence is, what a supporting detail is, even here at the College of Charleston.

When do you think it became clear to you that you wanted to be a writer?

I'm not entirely sure when I got the idea, “yeah, I'm gonna be a writer” versus “I dig writing” because I've always enjoyed writing, even as a kid in elementary school. But I don't think I'm unusual in that regard; I think most of us wrote stories or poems as children. But in terms of envisioning myself as a writer, it was something I kinda stumbled into.

As an undergraduate, I was originally interested in prose and took nearly as many fiction classes as poetry. But I wasn't living at home (or in the dorms) so I worked full-time at a yearbook plant to help put myself through college; I was on a graveyard shift (11pm-7am) 40 hours a week, and did ridiculous things like go to sleep for three hours, wake up for an 11am class, come home, take another nap, rinse and repeat. It was exhausting, and I'm not entirely sure how I survived during that time, but it worked out. And though I really dug creative writing, it was hard to find the time to write, so I would compose these pieces over my lunch break, at 2am. In some ways, it was an ideal time to compose a poem or a story, something about being able to tap into your subconscious mind, or your muse, or the ether, or the blue (as in, out of the). I discovered it was easier to compose a nearly-finished poem rather than just a fragment of a story over that 30 minute break, so I began to gravitate more towards poetry. Looking back it seems like an arbitrary concern is what propelled me towards poetry as opposed to prose, but it's true, and so that's how I ended up declaring poetry as my minor in college.

My mentor, Amy Fleury, an awesome poet, was the person who sat me down and told me “you're not bad at poetry; you should consider going to grad school” or something to that effect, and I followed her advice. Amy was also the person who would shoot me emails about poetry contest deadlines, one of which was the Cave Canem [pronounced “Kah veh Kah num”] Poetry Prize (https://www.cavecanempoets.org/cave-canem-prize), which my first book ended up winning. And here we are (with a lot of other good s--- happening in between).

Yusef Komunyakaa selected your manuscript for Missing You, Metropolis for the Cave Canem prize. It must have been exciting to have your work validated by such a significant voice in American poetry. What do you recall about that?

We had just landed in Korea, spent our first night in our hotel, and the following morning I found out through email that I had won. They had been trying to reach me for days by phone. Living in another country made it surreal: because I was so separated from everything, I just didn't think any of it was really happening. So there I was, sitting in cafés in Seoul, reading Komunyakaa’s notes and revising my poems.

Cave Canem set up a reading at New York University, and so I flew there and read with two runners up for the prize and Komunyakaa. Then we also read together.
Professor Vander Zee earned a BA in English from Purdue University in 2002 and an MA from Stanford University in 2005. In 2012, he earned his Doctorate in English from Stanford University. He teaches American Literature, with a specialty in American poetry. In addition to his position in the Department of English, he serves the Honors College as Director of Nationally Competitive Awards.
A lot has happened for you since last year, with starting your new appointment last fall as Assistant Professor, but even more importantly, the birth of your daughter, Elsa, in December. How’s it going? Is it tricky balancing things?

Having Elsa has definitely helped me re-prioritize and helps me do things more efficiently that previously might have taken up larger swaths of time. And if not more efficiently, than at least at some pretty strange hours. Grading at 4AM? Why not. I’ve also gotten better at relying less on a well-wrought script or plan in class and letting the class unfold in less structured ways, and that has had its own pedagogical benefits and lessons.

For a while now, you have been working in the Honors College as Director of Nationally Competitive Awards. Can you say a little bit about that position?

My role with NCA is to promote particular awards—Fulbright, Udall, Goldwater, Rotary, Rhodes, Truman, Gilman, NSF Graduate Fellowships, Hollings, and so on—recruit students to apply and then help them navigate often-complex application processes. This might mean setting up campus review committees and mock interviews, helping students polish the 7th version of their Fulbright personal and grant statements, writing institutional endorsements, or hosting information sessions about particular opportunities. We also put together an awards reception at the end of each year to recognize and value the formative work that goes into these applications on the part of the students. At that year-end reception, we also take that time to recognize all the mentors and the crucial roles they play.

Fulbright is perhaps the most intensive application process both for me and the students. This year, we will have a record 14 Fulbright applicants—three of which are current or former English students—which is a great showing for our College and our Department in particular. We have had consistent success with other awards as well; it’s exciting to help build the awards culture on this campus.

What I enjoy most about this job—and this is in part because of my other role as a teacher of academic writing—is helping students learn how to tell their stories, formulate their goals, and project a compelling possible future. I tell my applicants that each opportunity gives them a chance to write themselves into the world, to write themselves into those possible futures.

Any standout moments or highlights from this last year in teaching?

My course on the literatures of exploration, contact and settlement, which included historical overviews of the period—Alan Taylor’s *American Colonies* and Peter Wood’s *Black Majority*, for example—along with a range of texts from American Indian myths and Legends, to writings of exploration from Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca to classic Puritan writing.

Beyond these core texts, though, the course introduced students to archival research, and we spent a good deal of time in the South Carolina Historical Society looking at primary documents. Each student was responsible for selecting two documents, editing, and writing headnotes for them. The goal was to have at least one of these documents come from the Historical Society itself, and the other could come from the Early English Books Online, Early American Imprints, or other reprints of colonial-era documents. One student worked with a selection of poetry from the *Charleston Gazette*; some other students worked with letters about the Charleston fire of 1740. We worked together to categorize the pieces they selected, and we built a web-anthology, which we called *Colonial South Carolina: A Sourcebook*. We modeled the online project off of *Early Visions of Florida*, an online course-related project edited by Thomas Hallock and his students at the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg (http://earlyfloridalit.net). I still need to seek permission for some copyrighted material or make that material private—I wish there was a more robust educational fair-use policy—but I think the project turned out great.

Writing the headnotes was particularly challenging for students because typically in anthologies, such as the *Norton Anthology of American Literature*, the headnotes are written by experts who are thoroughly immersed in the topic at hand and they write without citation of outside sources—it’s like the voice of some academic god speaking. Students, on the other hand, are used to writing papers in upper-level classes that focus on bringing other voices to the surface and documenting all outside information, so the headnote genre presented some interesting challenges and led to some interesting in-class conversations.

You also taught the Modern Poetry class last year?

Yes, it was my second time teaching it, and I ran it with more of a focus on student-directed discussion this time. I gave the students a good deal of leeway in their final projects. Some wrote traditional final papers in order to further develop their skills in that academic genre, but many chose to pursue digital projects. One student,
a jazz drummer who had returned to school to study English and Creative Writing, researched connections between modern poetry and jazz, and he recorded renditions of poetry by Whitman, Ginsberg, and Stevens with jazz drumming as the backdrop. As an artist, he was interested in exploring the process of composition, and the way the poetry played off the beats and vice versa. He produced a number of versions of each piece and posted these to a music-sharing website. Another student did a project bringing together artistic sketches and poetry, in the vein of the poet Marianne Moore and provided an extensive textual apparatus to contextualize her work.

What are you, yourself, researching and writing about these days?

I have a few projects that I’m incrementally pushing down the road right now. I’m still working on the ideas I began exploring in my dissertation on Whitman’s late work and the influence of it on poets of the 20th century. The project focuses on ideas of late style with an emphasis on Whitman’s own neglected late work.

Over the summer, I was working on a critical review essay, in which I’m looking at Whitman’s so-called “disciples” who surrounded him late in life, such as Horace Traubel, who was with Whitman, at his home, almost daily for the poet’s final years. He went on to produce With Walt Whitman in Camden, a nine-volume set of transcriptions of their conversations which, at over 6,000 pages in length, might be considered the longest biography ever written on an American figure. The essay also surveys Whitman’s “late lives”—or how biographies since Henry Binns’s 1905 and Bliss Perry’s 1906 biographies and all the way to the present have treated Whitman’s late work. In the last section of the essay, I’m looking at critical studies from FO Matthiessen’s American Renaissance (1941) and Henry Nash Smith’s Virgin Land (1950) through what people are saying now about late Whitman. While some commentary on late Whitman is dismissive, there has been an interest in how he becomes more performative, more self-referential, and or more intentional in his later works. There are also some interesting linguistic analyses of the increasing abstraction of his late style, which may relate to his aging, his increasing abstraction from prior life roles.

Where else is your research and writing taking you these days?

I will be writing a biographical piece on George Oppen for a Scribner’s series on American authors pitched to a general audience. Oppen was Jewish American poet, a poet on the fringes of modernism, who published his first book in 1934. Soon after that book, he got invested in activism, joining the Communist Party, and dropped out of the poetry scene completely: he didn’t want to write party-line poetry, and his friends at that time didn’t even know he was a poet. He then fought in World War II at the Battle of the Bulge, and not long after he returned, he was forced into exile by the House Committee on UnAmerican Activities. He was in exile in Mexico for about 10 years. After he returned, he ended up winning a Pulitzer Prize in 1968 for a collection called Of Being Numerous and he has become a towering presence in post-war poetry—a figure of rare integrity and clarity. And this all loops back to Whitman, really. I’ll be presenting a paper on Oppen and Whitman’s late work at the ALA symposium on American poetry in October.

What else is going on for you in your work for the Honors College?

In addition to helping out where I can with advising and various strategic initiatives, I oversee the honors first-year experience course—Beyond George Street—a one-credit course spread across five sections that all of the roughly 220 honors first-year students take. I plan the curriculum, run about five of the classes, and oversee the instructional team, which includes three additional honors faculty members and 20 peer facilitators. It’s a great class: students build an e-portfolio, put together a professional resume, meet professors who can serve as future research partners, compose a reflective first-semester narrative, and chart out an integrated four-year action plan that includes all aspects of professional, academic, and community engagement. They also participate in Honors Engaged, a student-led, ongoing community engagement effort that has made a real impact in the broader Charleston community.

Also in relation to my work in the Honors College, I’ve just recently released, with Dr. Folds-Bennett, a national survey of honors first-year seminar programs, which I hope leads to an article or monograph on the honors college first-year experience more broadly. Many honors programs offer their own first-year seminars distinct from campus-wide offerings, and I am interested in exploring why that is, how such programs distinguish
The characters in *Think of Me and I’ll Know*, Anthony Varallo’s probing new collection of stories, face moments in which insight comes too late, or proves insufficient, often to humorous effect. The characters approach the edge of learning something about themselves or about their relationships with other people, only to be left with knowledge that is not particularly useful. Varallo ably captures the often confused and heartrending perspective of adolescents discovering the world, such as in “No One at All,” in which an eleven-year-old boy comes to see that another boy, two years older, is something less than a reliable friend. The author also captures the complications of family dynamics, such as the three generations of women in the related stories “Lucky Us” and “Tragic Little Me.” The stories in *Think of Me and I’ll Know* show that we are perhaps not much more comprehensible to ourselves than others are to us.
The past March saw the publication of *The Best of McSweeney's Internet Tendency* co-edited by Visiting Instructor John Warner and his McSweeney's co-editor, Chris Monks. The Onion A.V. Club review declares *McSweeney's Internet Tendency* as a “unique powerhouse of quirky comedy” and the book as “gut-bustingly funny” and suggests that readers, “keep the book in the bathroom...to be perused at leisure.” This past July marked John's 11th year of editorial involvement with McSweeney's.

John Warner

*Tough Day for the Army*

John Warner’s short story collection, *Tough Day for the Army*, will be published by Yellow Shoe Books/LSU Press this September. CofC English’s Bret Lott calls it a “strange and beautiful and very funny book.” We’re pretty sure he was under no duress when he said such nice things.

The Best of McSweeney’s Internet Tendency

This past March saw the publication of *The Best of McSweeney's Internet Tendency* co-edited by Visiting Instructor John Warner and his McSweeney's co-editor, Chris Monks. The Onion A.V. Club review declares *McSweeney's Internet Tendency* as a “unique powerhouse of quirky comedy” and the book as “gut-bustingly funny” and suggests that readers, “keep the book in the bathroom...to be perused at leisure.” This past July marked John's 11th year of editorial involvement with McSweeney's.
James Baldwin is a widely taught and anthologized author. His short story “Sonny’s Blues” remains a perennial favorite in literature anthologies and all of Baldwin’s essay collections and novels remain in print. His first essay collection, *Notes of a Native Son*, is a seminal work that led a new generation of African American writers from beneath the shadow of Richard Wright. *The Fire Next Time* is widely held as one of the most profound and accurate articulations of black consciousness during the Civil Rights movement. It is difficult to imagine teaching a survey of African American literature or considering the development of black intellectual thought in the twentieth century without some mention of Baldwin.

Readers and critics alike, for the past sixty years, generally agree that Baldwin is a major African American writer. What they do not agree on is why. Because of his artistic and intellectual complexity, Baldwin’s work resists easy categorization and Baldwin scholarship, consequently, spans the critical horizon. Conseula Francis’s book examines the major divisions in Baldwin criticism, paying particular attention to the way each critical period defines Baldwin and his work for its own purposes.
In an attempt to counter the insular narratives of much of the sesquicentennial commemorations of the Civil War in the United States, editors David T. Gleeson and Simon Lewis present this collection of essays that examine the war as more than a North American conflict, one with transnational concerns. The book, while addressing the origins of the Civil War, places the struggle over slavery and sovereignty in the United States in the context of other conflicts in the Western hemisphere. Additionally Gleeson and Lewis offer an analysis of the impact of the war and its results overseas.

Although the Civil War was the bloodiest conflict in U.S. history and arguably its single most defining event, this work underscores the reality that the war was by no means the only conflict that ensnared the global imperial powers in the mid-nineteenth century. In some ways the Civil War was just another part of contemporary conflicts over the definitions of liberty, democracy, and nationhood.

The editors have successfully linked numerous provocative themes and convergences of time and space to make the work both coherent and cogent. Subjects include such disparate topics as Florence Nightingale, Gone with the Wind, war crimes and racial violence, and choices of allegiance made by immigrants to the United States. While we now take for granted the nation's values of freedom and democracy, we cannot understand the impact of the Civil War and the victorious “new birth of freedom” without thinking globally.

The contributors to The Civil War as Global Conflict reveal that Civil War-era attitudes toward citizenship and democracy were far from fixed or stable. Race, ethnicity, nationhood, and slavery were subjects of fierce controversy. Examining the Civil War in a global context requires us to see the conflict as a seminal event in the continuous struggles of people to achieve liberty and fulfill the potential of human freedom. The book concludes with a coda that reconnects the global with the local and provides ways for Americans to discuss the war and its legacy more productively.
In this class we examined some of the fiction, non-fiction, memoirs, graphic representations, poetry, and music produced in the U.S. that responded directly to the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington on September 11, 2001. We began with two non-fiction accounts: the government-produced 9/11 Commission Report and 102 Minutes, a book that tells the immediate story of those trapped inside the twin towers during the attacks. We read novels by Jonathan Safran Foer, Jess Walter, Don DeLillo, John Updike, and Laila Halaby, works covering a wide-range of viewpoints and approaches. While some portrayed characters who either personally experienced the attacks or who lost family members in the attacks (DeLillo, Foer), others depicted the terrorist mindset or the after-effects of 9/11 on Arab and Muslim Americans (Updike, Halaby), and one even presented a dark, humorous satire on the events (Walter). In addition, we branched out into other art forms, reading a graphic novel by Art Spiegelman, poetry by Billy Collins, Toni Morrison, Adam Zagajewski, Galway Kinnell, Amiri Baraka, Wislawa Szymborska, and others, and song lyrics by popular musicians such as Bruce Springsteen and Toby Keith. We also examined the sculpture of Eric Fischl, the photography of Richard Drew and Kerry Skarbakka, and we watched the film, United 93.

In our discussions about these various artistic responses to 9/11, we focused on several themes. We discussed how these works represented cultural and political changes following the attacks. We talked about heroic myth-making that developed after the attacks and the ways that the writers and artists either upheld or debunked these myths. We read the work of Judith Herman and other trauma theorists in order to better understand post 9/11 literature in relation to other literatures of trauma, mourning, and commemoration. We looked at media representations of the attacks and discussed the commercialization of 9/11. We examined the relationship between terrorism and postmodernity. We looked as well at Americans’ imaginings of the terrorist mindset, of cultural and religious Others. While the course topic was not always an easy one—especially for the large number of students from the New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut area—it was always fascinating. The course offered a unique window into understanding contemporary American literature and culture.

—Susan Farrell

photo by Alan Strakey (Flickr - Creative Commons)
at the AWP [Association of Writers and Writing Programs] meeting in DC in 2011, which came together because of a completely fortuitous set of circumstances. Cave Canem had been around for 10 years and to celebrate the program, they had the first-year and the 10th-year winners and their judges read. For the 10th year it was Komunyakaa and me, and for the first year, it was Rita Dove and Natasha Tretheway [respectively]. My editor at Graywolf jokingly said I was spoiled: "your book just came out and now you're already reading with three Pulitzer Prize winning poets."

Then later I got packaged with Komunyakaa at a reading he was doing in Minneapolis, Minnesota for the NOMMO (http://www.givens.org/programs/nommo.php).

With all these readings and attention, I almost didn't have time to process what was happening.

Your first book is not a collection of only superhero or comics-themed pieces but includes poems like "Gap" that are not in that world at all. What brings the poems in the collection together?

My tag or cliché answer is that the book is about escapism. That's at least the one thing that kind of unites many of the poems. There are two central characters, me being one, my friend being the other, trying to figure out these different modes of escape from the real world, but also, even in the world of superheroes, those characters are trying to escape themselves, in a way. But then there's also all the typical s--- that's in the first book: loss, death, concerns of adolescence.

You are currently working on a second book. How is that coming along?

I feel that I have plenty of poems to call a book, but I feel like the trick is figuring out how to get these poems to talk to each other. I feel that I have hit a place where I am shifting attention from writing to collecting the poems, thinking about how they could be grouped or ordered, which is the challenge.
Hudson, Halle Berry, Sissy Spacek and, our only no-film star, Michael Jackson.

Finally, how did you “decide,” if that’s the right word for it, to become a film scholar?

That’s a tough question. I don’t think I can say, definitively, when I knew I would end up being a Film Studies professor, but I was certainly already interested in the profession when I was an undergraduate English major.

But earlier on, in terms of what got me into film, I can say this: I grew up watching old movies. My parents love Classical Hollywood era films, and we watched films from the 1940s, ’50s, and ’60s all the time. I grew up knowing stars like Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Deborah Kerr, Cary Grant, Ingrid Bergman, and so on. So I grew up with a deep fondness and appreciation for film that has stuck with me.

1955-1980

Paul Weidner ‘55 for twelve years was the Producing Director of the Hartford Stage Company (CT); his professional stage work has also been seen in New York, on Broadway and off-Broadway, and in WNET’s Theater-in-America series. He has guest-directed in major regional theaters and abroad.

A Peace Corps volunteer in the Ivory Coast and Zaire from 1980-82, he also holds an MFA from Yale University (Drama), where he also taught in the French department and later led a seminar in theater directing. He also taught in New York University’s Graduate Acting and Directing Programs.

Currently he is a docent with the Museum for African Art, New York City, conducts a primary-school program allied to the Brooklyn Museum of Art, and works with ACT NOW, a political action committee.

His novel, Memoirs of a Dwarf at the Sun King’s Court, was published by Terrace Books, Wisconsin, in 2004, and his “A Tale Told by an Idiot” appeared in The Long Story literary journal in 2012.

Linda (Sutker) Cope ‘64 works as a reference librarian at Willingboro Public Library in Willingboro, NJ. She also works there in the Local History Collection and has a painting studio (#204) at the Crane Arts Building at 1400 N. American St., Philadelphia, PA. In addition, she is a certified Yoga Therapist and works at the Temenos Center, Moorestown, NJ as well as privately.


Donna Maria Florio ‘74, after 17 years as a food editor with Southern Living Magazine is now flipping houses in her Birmingham neighborhood. The houses range in age from 1910 to 1940, and all are in need of extensive renovation and updating. It’s very satisfying, she says, to maintain their character while adding modern conveniences. Her contractor and she take great pride in restoring old woodwork, making floors gleam again, and providing buyers with a lovely, high-quality home. She says that she still loves to enjoy new restaurants, cook, and travel but is out of the writing business, at least for now.

1981-1990

Garrison M. Somers ‘81 is editing a free, monthly, literary magazine, and publishing books. His most recent volume is River, a Community of Artists Explores the Meaning of Nature. He is raising two brilliant girls (one of whom wants to join the legacy of her dad, aunt, uncle, and three cousins in attending CoC) and is happily living in a cottage in the woods near Chapel Hill, NC.

Ann Currie (Purcell) Williams ‘81 reports that her newest accomplishment is publishing a book she
wrote about her mother titled, *Sterling Silver and Stories, Life with my Southern Mother*. It is the story of her very Southern mother who fought a long battle with alcoholism, all the while maintaining those Southern manners and quirks Ann says all Southern women find necessary. Her mother managed to overcome her addiction, rise to live a second act, and help others. It is both a tragedy and a comedy and is available on Amazon. Currently she is working on her second book titled, *The Mother of the Bride Should Never Wear Blue and a Proper Southern Wedding is Never Held at Low Tide*, which she hopes to have out sometime this summer.

**John Mark Hunter ‘82** is Professor of Education at Tennessee State University in Nashville and serves as the department's Doctoral Program Coordinator. He also serves as Head Verger for Trinity Episcopal Church in Clarksville, Tennessee, where he lives with his wife.

Lately his family has been enjoying national and international travel together. Most recently, all five of them were in Germany for Christmas.

**Susan E. (Glenn) Weeks ‘83** married Jim Weeks in 2002, went on a mission trip to Namibia in 2006, and previously worked as a paralegal for attorneys who represent children in Florida's foster care system.

**Natalie (Parker) Bluestein ‘87** is the President of the Charleston County Bar Association, Chair of the Family Court Liaison Committee, and Regional and Ninth Circuit Chair of the SC Bar's Resolution of Fee Disputes Board. She practices family law in Charleston and frequently mediates, as well. She is also on the Gibbes Museum's Women's Council, is a Junior League of Charleston Sustainer, and just rotated off the Board for the Charleston State Company. She is married with no children, she says, but lots of pets!

**Audry Rebecca (Barkan) Hoge ‘88** worked in environmental publishing and editing for her first seven years after graduating and worked in facilitation and consulting for 10 years, including at HOK, the world's largest architectural and engineering firm. Currently, she works for a law firm in Roswell, GA, as Firm Administrator. She has a lovely 13 year-old daughter, Samantha, and has traveled to Tibet and Brazil, to name a few places.

**David Christopher Kahle ‘88** recently moved back to Los Angeles from Portland, OR, and has been working in nursing education as a simulation operations manager for the past several years, most recently at Mount St. Mary's College in the Brentwood neighborhood of West Los Angeles. Earlier this year, he completed his tenure as a board member at MRG Foundation, which funds grassroots Oregon social justice organizations. He is currently exploring volunteer and philanthropic opportunities close to the beach.

**Karen (Pate) Schwendinger ‘88** teaches at Robert E. Lee Academy in Bishopville, SC.

**John Paul Samonds ‘88** is Associate Dean of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College at the University of Mississippi.

**Glenn Allen Shedd ‘89** continues to run his own law practice. His oldest child, Matt, is in the Air Force and is stationed in New Mexico, after serving stints in Korea and Japan. His oldest daughter, Jessica, is about to graduate from the University of Alabama, Birmingham with a degree in Psychology. His youngest daughter, Savannah, is a rising senior at Fort Payne High School, where he graduated in 1980. And his youngest son, Dylan, is about to be in junior high school (6th grade) at Fort Payne Middle School.

**1991-2000**

**Tara Danner Hock ‘91, MA ‘96** has been married to her husband, Brad, for nine years. They have two daughters: Elliott is seven, and Alice Graham is five. After teaching English in the public school system for sixteen years, she left the profession to run their family vacation rental business. They have lived on Folly Beach in a home they renovated ourselves for ten years, and they are now in the process of renovating a home downtown and are looking forward to moving in later this year.

**Linda (Laycock) Wood ‘91** is a genealogist with a concentration on the American Revolution era.

**Lisa Ellison Broome ‘92** is Director of Student Services for the University of Kentucky Gaines Center for the Humanities.

**Heather (Hardy) Bryan ‘93** married Jason Grey Bryan (Class of 1993 also) in 2000. They have two sons, Greyson Knight Bryan (age 7) and Asher Hardy Bryan (age 5). She worked in healthcare communications for many years after attending graduate school at Miami University of Ohio. In 2009, she decided to take on the role of being a stay at home mom and now works during the school year as a pre-school teacher.

**Liz (Clarke) Robbins ‘94** is Associate Professor of English at Flagler College in St. Augustine, FL. Her third book, *Freaked*, won the 2014 Elixir Press Poetry Award, judged by Bruce Bond, and should be out in the fall.

**Robin Lee (Porter) Thompson ‘95** after 13 years in the classroom as a high school English teacher,
transitioned into Richmond Hill High School's Media Center as one of the media specialists. When her school expanded, she redesigned a former middle school media center space into a digital learning lab that works in conjunction with the school's media center. She was able to take a dingy, old space and transform it into a modern hub of learning where she collaborates daily with teachers and students on research skills, digital citizenship, and Web 2.0 tools. She worked closely with the school's Tech Resource Specialist for this project and has been able to use their experience with redesigning this space to present at several conferences, including the Georgia Educational Technology Conference in Atlanta last November (2013). She has been married for 17 years to Bo Thompson and they have two children, Jed, age 8, and Charlotte, age 5. They reside in Savannah, GA.

Tina Marie Cundari '96 is an Attorney with Sowell, Gray, Stepp & Laffitte, LLC, in Columbia, South Carolina.

Ana Maria Kimsey '97 is a CD Planner with the City of Raleigh, NC.

David Gustave Bates '97 is licensed as a Certified General Appraiser and is owner of Beresford Appraisal and Beresford Realty.

Melissa Norene (Mehl) Turner '97 taught 9th grade English literature for five years, one year in Summerville, SC, and four years in Annapolis, MD. She is currently preparing to homeschool her daughter in kindergarten and her son in preschool, beginning in July. She is helping in her church's children's ministry program by teaching, planning, and supporting administrative needs. She has tutored students in writing since leaving the classroom in June 2011.

Beth (Guerard) Maglione '98 is Vice President for Communications for NASFAA, the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, headquartered in Washington, DC. NASFAA provides training to financial aid administrators, advocates for policies that benefit college students, and creates a forum for discourse on financial aid issues. In her role at NASFAA, she directs the activity of a six-person communications and web services staff. They maintain a daily email newsletter for members (20,000+ subscribers) and a comprehensive website and news repository. She also directs and manages all media relations/PR efforts for the association, and serves as Secretary to NASFAA's Board of Directors. Post-CofC, she received a certificate in Nonprofit Management from Georgetown University. Her husband and she are expecting our first child this year.

Cherith Hope (Kintigh) Stoner '99 is an English teacher at Emerald High School in Greenwood, SC, and is pursuing an MEd in Gifted and Talented Education.

Rionne Lee Ridgeway '00 is Membership Development Specialist with the Greenville Chamber of Commerce in Greenville, SC.

Laura (Daniels) New '00 has worked with the MIL Corporation for 7 years on a project supporting the U.S. State Department. She manages a team of technical writers who develop software manuals and training materials for use in domestic offices, as well as at U.S. embassies overseas. She also runs a freelance graphic design and desktop publishing business. She lives in Mt. Pleasant with her husband Billy (English major, class of 1999) and their two children, Daniel (age 5) and Porter (age 1).

2001-2011

Katherine Ann Walker '01 after graduation earned her Masters in Library Science and worked for three years as a media specialist at James Island Charter High School. She then went to USC, earned her JD, and practiced civil defense litigation at Carlock, Copeland & Stair for several years. A year ago, she was excited to return to the College of Charleston as Assistant General Counsel. She loves working as a lawyer for the College.

Melissa (Pluta) Parker '01, MA '03 graduated from the University of South Carolina with a PhD in English, August 2013.

Katherine Sarah Zimmerman '01 stayed at CofC and earned an MS in Environmental Studies in 2004. As an independent consultant partially funded by CofC, she led several research and outreach projects on environmental justice, community empowerment, and water quality in the Charleston area. In 2006, she became a contractor to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Coastal Services Center in North Charleston, working on performance metrics and strategic planning. In 2009, she achieved a personal goal of being hired as a project manager by the South Carolina Coastal Conservation League (CCL), an environmental advocacy group. Promoted to CCL's Director of the Air, Water, and Public Health Program in 2013, she has continued to work on pertinent environmental issues in the Lowcountry. Her work has been published in PS: Political Science & Politics, the International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education, SC DHEC-OCRM, and Charleston Outdoors Magazine.

Nicole Marie (Champagne) Haberman '02 and her husband, Erich Haberman, welcomed their first child, a daughter named Charlotte Rose Haberman, on November 25, 2013. Nicole has been working as an Assistant Principal at Franklin High School in Franklin, Massachusetts since graduating from Harvard University's Graduate School.

Katherine “Katie” Leigh Silvester ‘02 recently returned from Nepal, where she conducted educational fieldwork in Bhutanese Refugee camps sponsored by a Fulbright-IIE Research Grant. She is now completing her dissertation, which looks at literacy, identity, and mobility in refugee contexts. Her work is being funded by a American Association of University Women (AAUW) Dissertation Fellowship. She is also an ESL/Composition Instructor in the Pima Community College Adult Education’s Refugee Education Project and the University of Arizona Writing Program.

Lauren (Chesnutt) Pavao ‘04, MA ‘10 is still living in the area—in Park Circle in North Charleston. After earning her MA, she worked for a time in technical writing for a government contracting company before moving over to CreateSpace, a local self-publishing company, where she worked in quality control for editing and marketing services. She now has a near two-year-old daughter, Basil (with the American-pronounced long “a”)—after her birth she quit her full-time position at the publishing company and switched over to working from home, on a freelance basis, editing books. She is ten years out of college and finally has her dream job—reading books all day from the comfort of her couch.

Jennifer (Kampsen) Carreras ‘04 is a 2008 graduate of the Georgia State University College of Law and currently owns and operates a law practice focused in the areas of child welfare law and family law. She is a nationally certified Child Welfare Law Specialist and is a Georgia Supreme Court Fellow. She resides in Roswell, Georgia, with her husband Jace Carreras, her son Ethan and their two dogs, Chaplin and Gracie.

Thea Star Gaillard ‘04 recently completed graduate studies at Webster University. She earned an MBA, with an emphasis in Human Resources Management. She has plans to earn additional certifications, conduct research, and do fundraising for preferred charities.

Paula (Passarella) Yarborough ’04 is a Senior Technical Writer at Blackbaud and is enrolled in the MA English program at CoC. She is married to Alan Yarborough, CoC class of 2000.

Steve Bellomy, MA ‘05, began the PhD program in English at the University of South Carolina in 2008 and is specializing in Colonial and 19th Century American literature, and expects to defend his dissertation (“fingers crossed!”) in Fall 2014.

Dana (Nunley) Laycock ‘05 lived in Charleston for a few years working in food and beverage and then moved back to her hometown outside of DC to get a “real job.” She started at CustomInk in January of 2007 as a Sales and Service Representative, became an Associate Manager of a sales team two years later, and then became the Development Manager of the entire department (here and in Reno, NV) two years after that. Soon she will be transitioning into a Team Manager role again, where she will manage both part and full time employees that are answering email inquiries from customers. In this role, she will be responsible for both the people and fine-tuning the process. She is married and has a beautiful baby girl, Claire, who is 9 months old, and, she says, “of course, always speaks fondly of C of C!”

Myles B. Brandt ‘06 moved to DC for a few years to pursue an MS in Economics from Johns Hopkins, from which he graduated from in May. He earned his CFP(r) in 2010, and has been working in Charleston for the past 7 1/2 years.

Mercer Meade Cronemeyer ‘06 frequently finds herself writing and editing at her current job and really enjoys revisiting her English degree in doing so. Since graduation, she has held a number of different jobs. She intended for quite some time to pursue veterinary school and thus has worked in a few different veterinary clinics as an assistant since graduation. She is currently enrolled in a graduate program in Environmental Studies. Her primary interests are water pollution biology, river/estuarine ecology, and species conservation.

Heather Renee Klugh ‘06 completed a Master of Public Health (MPH) at Tulane University in 2012 and is a CDC Evaluation Fellow at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Erica Lisa Skibinski ‘06, MA ‘12, teaches English at Goose Creek High School in Goose Creek, SC. She also teaches competitive dance at Tapio School of Dance and Gymnastics in Mount Pleasant, SC.

Nathaniel James Cochran ‘07 completed an MA in Political Theory in 2012, was married in August 2012, and then relocated to Washington, DC. They purchased a home in August 2013 and had their first child in Dec 2013. In 2013, he finished editing a 900-page manuscript of essays by a famous American scholar who spent his entire career at St. John’s College, Annapolis, but has not yet determined a means of publication.

Daniel James Powell ‘07 recently served as a research assistant at the Electronic Textual Cultures Lab at the University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, where he enrolled in a PhD program in the Department of English. He is currently an Early Career Researcher at King’s College London, London, United Kingdom.
Krystle Danielle Singleton ’07 is a high school English teacher and a swimming and water polo coach. She also sponsors an all-girl’s service organization, the Keyettes.

Erin Marie (Walsh) Ulmer ’07 began working in May 2014 with Camp Rise Above, a nonprofit that provides life-changing camp experiences to children with serious illnesses, diseases, and life challenges.

Erin Leigh Workman ’07 is a Lecturer at the University of Maine.

Chad Abushanab ’08 finished his MFA in Creative Writing at Vanderbilt University in 2012. From ’12-’14, he was a lecturer in the English department there, teaching poetry courses. Now he is preparing to move to Lubbock, TX where he’ll begin work toward a PhD at Texas Tech. His poems/essays can be found (most recently) in The Raintown Review, Bayou Magazine, Resources for American Literary Scholarship, and The Chronicle of Higher Education.

Annie M. Costigan ’08 currently works for Occidental Petroleum in Washington, DC, and is pursuing an MA in Middle Eastern Studies at George Washington University.

Shannon Emery ’08 is currently running the social media arm of the Customer Support department at Blackbaud. She has continued to do extensive volunteering around the community, especially with Habitat for Humanity and HALOS. She just recently got back from Utila, Honduras for her international trip of the year. Her domestic travel has included Washington, DC; Kitty Hawk, NC; Seattle, WA; with a few other trips are on the horizon since she loves to travel!

Brittney Joyce (Farish) Jones ’08 graduated from the University of South Carolina School of Law in 2011 with a JD. She was sworn into the South Carolina Bar in 2011. She then began working as an Attorney at the Floyd Law Firm, PC in Surfside Beach, SC in 2011. Her practice is focused on Elder Law, Estate Planning, and Civil Litigation. She married Justin Jones on October 12, 2013, and they live in Murrells Inlet, SC.

Audra (Hammons) Turkus ’08 lives in Denver, Colorado, where she is the English Department Chair for grades 6-8 at Littleton Academy Charter School.

Kathryn Luksus ’08, after graduation, married her CoF C sweetheart and fellow Theater alum, Jon Van Pinxteren. He joined the Air Force, and she worked as a scenic carpenter until the military required them to move from Charleston. They currently reside in Fussa, Japan, where she is teaching belly dance as part of the fitness/dance programs offered on base. She is also currently studying Japanese language, dance, and culture. Since graduation she has kept her pen busy writing creative pieces for a collaboration project, a church program that is still in development.

Hannah (Metivier) Gompers ’08 is a telecommunicator with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department and will graduate from the Graduate School at American Military University in June 2015 with an MA in Emergency Management and Disaster Preparedness. She is writing her thesis, with hopes for its future publication.

Eleanor Pleasants Smeallie ’08 works for the Public Broadcasting Service as Assistant Director of Content, PBS Education.

Gale Marie Thompson ’08 has a book of poems, Soldier On, due out in January 2015 from Tupelo Press. She is a third year PhD student in English and Creative Writing at the University of Georgia, where she focuses on individual and cultural memory. She teaches composition and creative writing at the university and also works as a part-time freelance writer and graphic designer. You can view her writing, teaching and design portfolio online at http://galemariethompson.com.

Braden Tennesen Trainor ’08 heads the Operations Division at PMO, Marine Corps Base Smedley D. Butler, which performs security and law enforcement for two installations and eight camps across the island of Okinawa. Their mission is to conduct patrol operations, emergency response, access control, and criminal investigations on behalf of the Commanding General, MCIPAC. They manage shared, off-base jurisdiction and enjoy a close partnership with adjacent, host-nation law enforcement. This is his second year in this position. Braden and his wife’s daughter, Monica, begins 8th grade in the fall, and they have another child due in November 2014.

Joseph Bowling ’09 is a PhD candidate at the CUNY Graduate Center, where he is beginning a dissertation on the reception of medieval legendary history in seventeenth-century England. He teaches at Queens College and works as a copyeditor for Renaissance Quarterly. Over the summer, he had the opportunity to do archival research
in preparation for the dissertation at the Bodleian Library in Oxford and the British Library in London and is attending an archival research seminar at the Folger Library for the current academic year.

Jennifer (Crosby) Burgess, MA ‘09 is in her second year in the PhD program (Rhetoric, Composition, & Literacy Studies) at Ohio State. She has enjoyed teaching FYW (First Year Writing) this Fall and looks forward to teaching a hybrid writing course as well as working in the Writing Center this spring. After completing coursework this semester, she will focus on her candidacy exams and continue working on her dissertation. Her dissertation is an extension of a project that she began in Amy Mecklenburg-Faenger’s graduate course at CofC. Jennifer, her husband Joe, and their three children are enjoying Columbus, but they are still trying to adjust to the winters.

Ryan Graudin ‘09 is now a full time writer. Her first book All that Grows, a young adult novel published through HarperTeen, debuted in February. Her second book The Walled City, which is a young adult thriller based on the Kowloon Walled City in Hong Kong, is being released by Little, Brown on November 4th. The Walled City was a featured YA Buzz Book at this year’s Book Expo of America. When she’s not writing, she is photographing weddings with David Strauss Photography and playing with her wolf dog. You can visit her online at ryangraudin.com

Kelley Eileen Sirko, MA 09 went to USC for her MLIS, which she finished in 2012. She moved back to her hometown of Nashville, TN soon after graduating and, after taking a little time for herself, she began to work at the Metro archives as a volunteer. After some time, a job position opened up that she was able to apply for. She reports, “I absolutely love my job, and I’ve had the opportunity to work on some great projects and get some great experience in the field. History is everywhere, and I’ve been finding it in some of the most unexpected places.”

Andrew Joseph Rudick ‘09 has been performing stand up comedy for the last two years and is about to earn an MA in English from Xavier University.

Edgar Clinton “Clint” Tawes ‘09 just earned an MEd in Curriculum and Instruction at Georgia Southern University and has been accepted to begin work on an EdS in Educational Leadership at Georgia Southern in the fall of 2014. He is an English teacher and chair of the English Department at New Hampstead High School in Savannah, GA. His goal is to transition into administration soon and is currently interviewing for positions.

Cara Amiee (Wideman) Walters ‘09 works as a marketing copywriter, writes sales literature, web content, magazine articles, and helps facilitate contributions to social media at Rice Lake Weighing Systems. She is married, has one daughter, Sydney, and lives in rural Wisconsin.

Whitney Elizabeth Wilder ‘09, during her time at Charleston School of Law, served as Associate Articles Editor for Charleston Law Review; was a member of the Moot Court Board, the Trial Advocacy Board, and the Honor Council; and served as a peer mentor. In May 2014, she graduated cum laude. After nine amazing years in Charleston, South Carolina, she moved back home to Baltimore, Maryland to begin her law career. She begins a clerkship in September.

Chris Willoughby ‘09 for the past year has been traveling up and down the East Coast doing research on his dissertation (spending the most time in Philadelphia and Charleston, but also working Lexington, Ky., Richmond Va., Washington D.C., Boston, Ma., and New York, NY). His dissertation is heavily influenced by Michel Foucault’s Birth of the Clinic (“first read at C of C! Thanks!”) and looks at constructions of race in antebellum American medical theory.
and the relationship between anatomical education and the evolution of racial theory. Next year, he will be a dissertation fellow at the Murphy Institute’s Center for Ethics and Public Affairs, while continuing to travel for research through grants from the National Science Foundation and the Philadelphia Area Center for the History of Science.

Caitlin Gregg “Cat” Buckley ‘10 is living in New York and working at Vanity Fair, where she was recently promoted to Editorial Associate. Mary Alice Miller, CoFC ’12, sits ten feet away from her.

Molly Lewis ‘10 is now in her fourth year in the English PhD program at George Washington University. She is currently in the beginning stages of writing her dissertation on race and the ecomaterial in medieval literature. Molly is also teaching her own early British literature course entitled “Sensing Britain” and presenting at various medieval conferences in the coming year. Lastly, and on a more personal note, she recently became engaged on a summer trip to—of course—Charleston.

Cassandre Ann “Cassie” Mandel ‘10 joined Hachette Books, a start-up imprint focused on narrative non-fiction, pop culture, celebrity memoir, health and wellness, business, and a few sprinkles of literary fiction. “Taking the job was risky,” she says, but “I knew it would be a professional game changer. Because we are only five people (publisher, editorial assistant, publicity and marketing director, publicist (me), and a publicity and marketing assistant), I am experiencing the publishing world in a way I never dreamed I would get to experience at this point in my career. My passion for books, reading, and working with authors has been reinvigorated. Each day is exhausting but exciting.”

Alexa Moyer ‘10 moved to New York for an editorial position with W. W. Norton a few months after graduation in May 2010. She has been a member of Norton’s advertising team for the past two years and was recently promoted to Copywriter. She is really enjoying life in New York and all that the city has to offer and makes sure to get back to Charleston whenever possible. “The College will always be really special to me,” she says.

Bryanna Nicole Parker ‘10 completed a Master’s degree in English at Northeastern University and moved to New York City. She is currently working and saving as she decides where and what she wants to pursue next. “Everything still feels fairly up in the air!,” she says. “It’s been less than a year since I moved to NY and finished up my degree! I enjoy working at my school (Ethical Culture Fieldston School)—and I certainly appreciate its dedication to progressive education.” She serves on the Diversity Committee and has enjoyed the school’s proactive strides in this area and others.

Erin Laray Stubbs ‘10 is beginning a Masters (MS) in Literature and Society at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland beginning September 2014.

Autumn Lynne Bennett ‘11 just recently moved to Washington, DC after spending a couple of years in Southern California working at the Ayn Rand Institute. Over the summer on her way to DC, she traveled across the country by car stopping at places like the Grand Canyon; Austin, TX; Roswell, NM; New Orleans, LA (her favorite by far); and Charleston, SC (of course). She also took a trip to Northern Italy, Florence, and Rome and reports that it “was absolutely amazing.”

Maranda Paige Christy ‘11 is, at the moment, volunteering at a museum and enjoying it very much, which, she says, with her strong interests in History and Archaeology is a good fit, and her English degree comes in handy for the writing (and research) involved with her daily work. She’s also moving to London this September to pursue a Master’s Degree in Cultural Heritage Studies, with no plans of staying or leaving when her degree is finished: she’s open to all possibilities. If and when she does return to the U.S., she says her dream is to work for the National Park Service in some capacity.

William Fletcher Haden ‘11 graduated in May with an MFA in Acting from the University of Connecticut.

Jennifer (Hess) Graham, MA ‘11, is an English Instructor and Academic Program Coordinator at Trident Technical College.

Morgan (Marzolf) Wiegand ‘11 is interning with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Office of Counsel as a law clerk while she attends the Charleston School of Law. She and her husband recently purchased their first home on James Island.

Jessica Marie Riggs ‘11 is still working as a technical writer at Savvee Consulting, Inc., while also working on the weekends at Whirlin’ Waters as a cook to earn extra money. She is still writing, editing, and reviewing project documentation and continuing to maintain content in Confluence, but soon will make a shift to SharePoint. She also snagged her first freelance writing gig for a local fabric company who was updating their website.

Jessica Marie Atkinson ‘12, in May 2013, gave birth to her daughter and has had a wonderful first year with her at home. In January 2014, she enrolled in an alternative teaching certification program called ABCTE in order to get started on the path of becoming a teacher. She’s been substitute teaching a couple of times a week since February, primarily
at Charleston County School of the Arts. She was just hired by School of the Arts to be a 7th grade ELA teacher’s long-term substitute teacher for the fall and is very excited that she is well on her way into the teaching profession. She says, “I value the education I received at College of Charleston, and am so happy with where life as taken me post-graduation. I am thrilled to be a mother and a teacher! Later on down the line, I plan to return to College of Charleston to earn my MAT in Middle Grades.”

Morgan Samantha Collins ‘12 works at a small local branch of an international software company that serves non-profit arts and entertainment sectors. She is the manager of the team providing software support to their high-profile clientele.

Alexandra Elise Daley ‘12 works as a technical writer at Benefitfocus, which she describes as her “dream job of working as a professional writer at an amazing company.”

She also had nine poems published in the last year by the following literary journals: Dead Flowers: A Poetry Rag, Emerge Literary Journal, FLARE: The Flaglar Review, JMWW, Lingerpost, and The Oklahoma Review.

Olivia Brooke Asbury ‘13 is working an export documentation clerk for Mediterranean Shipping Company (USA) Inc.

Victoria Boneburg ‘13 works at the History Press. She was hired in the publicity department before she officially graduated and then moved to the sales department a couple of months later. She interned at the press through the CofC internship program.

Charles Herbert ‘13 is pursuing an MFA in Poetry and Literature at Bennington College. He continues to publish poems in both print and online journals.

Morgan Rion Mikolajczyk ‘13 moved to Charlotte to attend law school and work toward becoming a family law attorney. She completed her first semester second in her class and has just finished the second semester. After graduation from law school, she plans to take the Bar Exam in both North and South Carolina, and she hopes to become a lawyer specializing in divorce or mediation.

Also, she was married on June 14, 2014 to, she says, “the man of my dreams, after meeting him during my time at the College of Charleston.”

Nikki Palazzo ‘13 started working at BiblioLabs part-time while finishing up school last summer. She has moved around within the company quite a bit since going full-time, from QA to editorial team member to training manager to training/marketing/PR manager. She goes to conferences for the company and host webinars with all sorts of “quirky librarians.”

At night, she writes freelance articles for a holistic healing company she used to intern for through CofC. The articles are published in Natural Awakenings. She’s also chipping away at finishing her novel.

Hayley Garrison Phillips ‘13 travels throughout the South, exploring the culinary traditions of different cities, photographing, and writing about her experiences. She is an assistant editor at the Local Palate magazine.

Thomas Edward Plichta, MA ‘13, still retired after serving 27 years in US Navy and 11 years as an executive for Northrop Grumman, has continued volunteer work as Guardian ad Litem and just finished his first year of teaching English at the Citadel.

Flannery (Winchester) Keck ‘13 joined the staff at Best Self Atlanta Magazine in June of 2013, almost exactly a month after graduation from CofC. She started as a full time social media coordinator/support staff member for a small team of about seven employees. She had the opportunity to write several feature articles, interview influential Atlantans, and provide support to the production department and the sales staff. Her responsibilities steadily increased, and by March 2014, she was promoted to assistant editor. She soon also took on the role of interim editor during her editor’s maternity leave. Halfway through May, when her editor decided not to return, she was offered and has now accepted the position of editor. She also married Brad Keck in August of 2013 in Nashville, TN. They honeymooned in Costa Rica and plan to stay in Atlanta for the foreseeable future.


John was to be found at both the MLA Annual Convention in Chicago in January and the SCMS conference in Seattle in March of 2014. He presented “The Comic Rhythm of Adaptation, or: 'Come Up to My Place" at the former and “The Non-Com: Frank Alverson's The Comedy" at the latter. John was one of two judges at the 8th Annual Student Film Festival in April (it is, in fact, the oldest film festival in Charleston!). He is also delighted to report that the Film Studies minor has its largest number of students ever—thanks in large part, no doubt, to the addition of Dr. Colleen Glenn to the program.

Tim Carens had a rewarding experience in Summer 2014 teaching a study-abroad class in London. The class, titled “The Dark Side of Progress,” focused on 19th-century texts that challenged Britain’s self-perception as the center of refined civilization. Gothic works such as Wuthering Heights, Jekyll and Hyde, the Sherlock Holmes stories, and Dracula, helped to uncover British anxieties about the nation’s vulnerability to savage passion and barbaric invasion.

Their study of such texts was complimented by all kinds of interesting excursions in London. The class visited a gruesome 19th-century operating theater, took a chilling walking tour of Jack the Ripper’s crime sites, and stood in a vast line for the privilege of entering the wonderfully cheesy Sherlock Holmes museum (which pretends that the fictional detective actually existed). The magnificent art and history museums of London furnished many “high culture” experiences as well. Some highlights of the trip occurred outside London: they visited Emily Brontë's house in the quaint village of Haworth, toured the medieval streets of the walled city of York, and, in Edinburgh, climbed “Arthur's Seat,” the hill that broods over the city.

After visiting Edinburgh, the class had a mid-semester break during which the students scattered throughout Europe. Meanwhile, Carens sought, unsuccessfully, to catch salmon on a fishing trip in the Scottish Highlands. Luckily, the stunning scenery provided abundant recompense for the lack of sport.

Back in London, Carens had some time to pursue a related research project, which works to understand the construction of middle-class masculinity in 19th-century angling narratives. The British Library furnished many additional texts to ponder, as it always does.

Bonnie Devet published “Untapped Resource: Former Tutors Training Current Writing Center Tutors” and “Humor in the Writing Center: Fostering Creativity through a Cartoon Caption Contest: in Writing Lab Newsletter. Another piece, “Bringing Grammar Back into the Writing Center” which
originally appeared in *Southern Discourse: Publication of the Southeastern Writing Center Association* was reprinted in *Journal of ATEG* [Assembly for the Teaching of Grammar].

Her article, "Writing Center Training through Triangulation" (originally published in *Academic Exchange Quarterly*) will be reprinted as a book chapter in *Sound Instruction: Ready-to-Use Classroom Practice*, Vol. 3. Also forthcoming is "Using Metagener and Ecocomposition to Train Writing Center Tutors for Writing in the Disciplines" (*Praxis Writing Center Journal*) and "Becoming a ‘Soul Twin’: Students’ Editing Other Students’ Drafts" (*TETYC*).

She also published three other pieces: "South Carolina Directors Meet," "Memories of SWCA Conferences Past" (both in *Southern Discourse*), and "Third Annual Directors’ Meeting of PSWCA" (*Palmetto State Writing Center Association Newsletter*).

Dr. Devet also gave a keynote address, "Peering Across the State: A Celebration of Peer Writing Center Tutors" at the Palmetto State Writing Center Association at Lander University in September 2013 and delivered a paper entitled "Communicating to Consultants the Worth and Value of their Writing Lab Work" at the Palmetto State Writing Center Association meeting at Furman University in March 2014. In addition, she served as a proposal reviewer for the 2014 International Writing Center Conference in Orlando, FL.

Finally, she also wrote three travel pieces: “The Hoover Dam’s Human Touches” (*Traveling Tales* - http://www.travelingtales.com/devet/index.html), “Lingering with a Real Spider-Man at Hoover Dam” (*We Said Go Travel* - http://www.wesaidgotravel.com), and “Tomb Travel into Pre-Roman Italy” (*Travel/Mag* - http://travelmag.co.uk/?p=11348).

**Mike Duvall** developed and taught an English senior seminar on Mark Twain. He also presented a paper at the annual conference of the Society for Utopian Studies, “Ability and Disability in Gilded Age and Progressive Era Novels of Socialism,” and did research at the Hagley Museum and Library in Wilmington, Delaware and at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. In addition, he served his first year as the College’s Faculty Secretary.

**Julia Eichelberger** went on a couple of trips in the Fall of 2013 to tell people about her book, *Tell About Night Flowers: Eudora Welty’s Gardening Letters, 1940-1949*, published May 2013. She read from the book at the Eudora Welty House and Garden in Jackson MS, where so many of the letters in her book were written. In October she presented at the Southern Festival of Books in Nashville. During that semester, she also worked for the Office of Academic Affairs to help several departments, including English, further the professional development of their adjunct faculty.

While on sabbatical in Spring 2014, she took two English majors, Susie Jackson and Tammy Matthews, on a research trip to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, exploring unpublished correspondence between Welty and Frank Lyell, a friend from Jackson who became an English professor at the U of Texas. Other sabbatical work included two conference papers on Welty and a book of essays on Welty she is co-editing, and ongoing research on Charleston writers and Lowcountry history.

She also coordinated the Region 3 competition of Poetry Out Loud, a poetry recitation contest for high school students that the English Dept and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences has been hosting at the College. It was great to hear high school students reciting poetry and to have C of C students involved in hosting the event. Speaking of students, she adds, “I was proud to be part of the College community, including so many of our students and alumni, as we stood up for academic freedom and diversity this past year. Attending a sold-out performance of *Fun Home* this spring was moving, memorable, and heartening.’

**Valerie Frazier** was honored to be selected by College of Charleston Young Alumna of the Year Stephanie Felder as her favorite teacher. Stephanie featured Dr. Frazier prominently during her tribute video at the annual Alumni Gala: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ywBF_h3A8c. Stephanie has become a national spokesperson (appearing on CNN and NBC news programs) and advocate for homeless veterans, juveniles at risk, and the mentally ill. Dr. Frazier also worked closely with one of her ENGL 517 graduate students, Chris Cole, as he composed his essay “What Echoes Tell Us: The Underlying Queer and Racial Elements in Gwendolyn Brooks’s *Maud Martha* and Selected Poems,” which was published in January 2014 in the journal *New Academia* (3.1). Additionally, Dr. Frazier has been appointed the chair of the national planning committee for the Society for the Study of the Multi -Ethnic Literature of the United States (MELUS) conference, which the College of Charleston will host March 3-6, 2016.

**Joseph Kelly**’s 2013 America’s Longest Siege: Charleston, Slavery, and the Slow March toward Civil War appeared in paperback in summer 2014. He lectured at the North
Shore Civil War Roundtable in New York and delivered a paper, “Joyce’s ‘An Encounter’ and Urban Ecocriticism” at the University of London, both in November. During his sabbatical year, he’s writing a book on castaways, Jamestown, Shakespeare, and American exceptionalism.

Simon Lewis edited, with David Gleeson, The Civil War as Global Conflict, a collection of essays that is part of the ongoing CLAW (Carolina Lowcountry and Atlantic World) commemoration of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, which in turn spun off the Jubilee Project which ran all through 2013 (see jubilee-projectsc.wordpress.com) and which will all be ending in grand style with a series of events in spring 2015 commemorating the liberation/fall of Charleston (February), Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address (March), and the end of the war altogether (April). Simon is back in the director’s seat of CLAW again and invites everyone to check out the CLAW web-site (http://claw.cofc.edu), blog (http://blogs.cofc.edu/claw/), and Facebook page throughout the year.

He is also picking up the editorship of Illuminations again and invite alums to spread the word that the magazine is up and running again, next issue out May/June 2015 (http://illuminations.cofc.edu).

Finally, the second of his two sabbatical articles on Olive Schreiner and New World thought came out in Research in African Literatures (Summer 2014): “Reading Olive Schreiner Reading WEB Du Bois.”

Scott Peeples contributed a chapter, “The City Mystery Novel,” to the Oxford History of the Novel in English (American Novel to 1870), and presented a paper, “Poe as Commodity,” at the American Comparative Literature Association annual meeting in New York.

Emily Rosko published poems in Anti-, New American Writing, and Sycamore Review, and she published a review-essay on the poet Phyllis Janowitz at Octopus Magazine. She spent the summer tending her infant daughter Elsa (a precocious crawler, in love with the dog, Dasha) and working on her third book of poems, thanks to the support of the College’s Faculty Research and Development Grant. Three poems from this new manuscript won a 2013 Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg prize. This past year, her work as poetry editor for Crazyhorse was endorsed by a prestigious reprint—Terrance Hayes selected “LA Police Chief Daryl Gates Dead at 83” by Amaud Jamaul Johnson for Best American Poetry 2014.

Myra Seaman spent last year on sabbatical, writing a book she’d been researching on and off for years: Objects of Affection: The Book and the Household in Late Medieval England. The book is an extended analysis of a late 15th-century manuscript anthology of narrative and lyric verse produced for a household in central England—the manuscript that was the focus of the senior seminar "Medieval Prime Time: Entertaining the Family in Late 15th Century England" she taught in Spring 2011.

She spent fall semester living in Brooklyn and then moved on to Portland, Oregon, for the remainder of her leave. While away, she gave a series of invited talks based on different parts of her book, at the Medieval Club of New York, the University of Victoria, the University of British Columbia, and Oregon State University. A book she co-edited was published in May, Burn After Reading, Vol. 1: Tiny Manifestoes for a Post/medieval Future. She gave a paper on reality and romance at the International Congress of Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, MI, and attended the MLA in Chicago. Over the summer, she gave a talk on the future of the book at the New Chaucer Society congress held in Reykjavik, Iceland. In September she attended the symposium sponsored by the BABEL Working Group that she co-organized, “Critical/Liberal/Arts,” at the CUNY Grad Center; she is currently editing a related special issue of postmedieval.

She ran her favorite marathon in October, the Maine Marathon in the other Portland, and in May she ran her worst marathon ever, with heavy rains that never stopped, in Vancouver. Heading back to Charleston over the summer with Objects of Affection 85% complete, she’s eager to get back to the classroom.

Catherine Thomas taught a summer study abroad course in London and Edinburgh on Shakespeare. She and her students enjoyed discussing plays, seeing them performed at internationally recognized venues such as the Globe Theater and Royal Shakespeare Theater, and touring archives, castles, museums, and other key sites to get a handle on how early modern culture affected the writing and reception of these texts. In December 2013, her co-edited collection with Dr. Jennifer Feather, Violent Masculinities: Male Aggression in Early Modern Texts and Culture, was published by Palgrave. Since then she has completed two book reviews, a theater review of the National Theater's production of King Lear in London, and an article on using digital image databases as a learning tool in the classroom. She is looking forward to serving in a new administrative role this year, as Associate Chair of the department.

This fall, she and her husband, Bill, also will take on new roles as parents, welcoming their first child into the world. His Shakes-bear and Dalek onesies await his arrival.

John Warner published two books, see above.
As professors of literature at the College of Charleston, we object to all such misguided efforts by those in power to dictate which texts we assign. *Fun Home* explores many compelling subjects, including grief, family dynamics, forgiveness and the tragic mystery of suicide.

Books we assign every semester bear scars of similar efforts to suppress them in whole or in part. In the 19th century, Shakespeare’s bawdy jokes were trimmed from his plays. Thomas Hardy, who refused to scold female characters for extramarital sex, saw his novels condemned by religious authorities and rejected by libraries. James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, now acknowledged a modernist masterpiece, was at first denounced as obscene and pornographic, banned in Britain and the United States for over a decade.

[State] Rep. Smith’s proposal represents the latest effort in a long history of narrow-minded censorship that can’t see beyond the sexual content of a literary work to appreciate its moral, psychological, political and aesthetic complexity. As faculty committed to higher education in the liberal arts and sciences, we believe that students grow by encountering, considering, and questioning a range of ideas and perspectives, especially those that challenge popular biases. This is—in part at least—why we teach texts that subvert restricted understanding of sexual normality: the love sonnets that Shakespeare addressed to a man, for example, or Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*, Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando*, and other works by LGBT authors such as W.H. Auden, James Baldwin, Rita Mae Brown, E.M. Forster, Allen Ginsberg and Adrienne Rich.

We value the works of these authors not because they promote the “gay and lesbian lifestyle”—a phrase revealing the absurd fear that a book might convince a reader to whimsically exchange one sexual identity for another—but because they are fascinating and sophisticated works of art, because they capture the intricacies of their cultural moments, because they illuminate interesting theoretical and aesthetic questions, and because they document the beauty and sadness, the failures and triumphs, experienced by LGBT authors and characters.

Such works thereby confront and repudiate the fear and loathing of alternative sexual identities and give our students what they deserve: the opportunity to broaden their understanding of literature and social experience, expand their sympathies, and appreciate the diversity and complexity of human lives and loves.

— Tim Carens

Last year, the College’s budget for 2014-15 was threatened with a cut of over $50,000 as punishment for the College’s having adopted Alison Bechdel’s award-winning memoir *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* for our 2013 *College Reads!* program. The University of South Carolina, Upstate was similarly threatened, to the tune of over $17,000, for selecting *Out Loud: The Best of Rainbow Radio* for use in their first-year reading program. These amounts, those who initiated the cuts asserted, were equivalent to the costs associated with each selection. Spearheaded by State House Representative Garry Smith, the cuts, he said, were designed to “make it hurt” and to send a message. The College responded at all levels to the assault on academic freedom, from student-led protests to then-President George Benson’s unequivocal defense of the College and its choice of *Fun Home*. Several academic departments composed statements in response. The Department of English’s, which was sent to the Speaker of the SC House of Representatives, the Board of Trustees, to the College community, and to our own majors, read “the College of Charleston English Department condemns this action as an attempt to censor future assigned or recommended reading material, thus violating the principle of academic freedom. Furthermore, we condemn this attempt to punish the College for choosing a book that focuses on the experiences of lesbian and gay characters.” Additionally, our own Tim Carens wrote the following letter, signed by 25 other English faculty, which was published in the *Post and Courier* (12 March 2014). While in the end, the funds were restored (with a few strings attached), the threat they represented to our mission was a clarifying and reviving moment for the work we continue to do at the College and especially in the Department of English.
Thank you for your continued support of the Department of English.

If you are interested in making a gift, please send a check payable to the College of Charleston Foundation to

The School of Humanities and Social Sciences
66 George Street
Charleston, SC 29424

Please note "Department of English" on your check.

If you have any questions please contact the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at 843.953.0766