From the Corner of Elm and Friendly
Shelley Crisp, Executive Director, North Carolina Humanities Council

IN LATE DECEMBER 2010, the welcome news from Shelby, North Carolina, was that the last stop of the touring Smithsonian Institution exhibition New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music offered a grand finale to an amazing year. Amid the sounds of gospel and guitar, jazz and dulcimer, the music of the mills and music from the southern mountains, audiences gathered round to enjoy memory, history, Don Gibson tunes, the Earl Scruggs family reunion, a betrothal, and even a rhythm and roots run. New Harmonies proved that nothing is finer, as the old song goes, than being “Where the morning glories/Twine around the door,/Whispering pretty stories/1 long to hear once more.”

This issue of North Carolina Conversations is filled with the lyricism of places and the stories that mark and preserve them. The photography of Christine Rucker and the words of Phoebe Zerwick capture the long and flowing Yadkin River and the people whose voices ring out across the water. Rob Amberg explains how the camera is a “visual journal,” saving time and place for reflection. Ben Casey follows the Neuse and Trent Rivers, collecting stories and images that imprint and transform a life.

Not all the stories are as pretty as twining morning glories, for as Eudora Welty so wisely knew, “People give pain, are callous and insensitive, empty and cruel...but place heals the hurt, soothes the outrage, fills the terrible vacuum that these human beings make.” In Traci Lazenby Elliot’s award-winning “Legacy,” a haunted landscape renders memory as potent as resurrection and possibly as healing for at least one person, maybe for an era.

Author, poet, teacher, and 2002 Caldwell Laureate Reynolds Price took his leave of us this year. The New York Times obituary claimed he was the “Literary Voice of the South,” how Price considered himself Welty’s heir. Alan Gurganus, newly inducted in the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame, explained more pointedly: Reynolds Price “made...[a] small corner of North Carolina the sovereign territory of his own imagination and showed those of us who went away that the water back home was fine. We could come back; there was plenty of room for all of us.” In the lyrics to a song Price assisted James Taylor in writing, there is that same kinship with place that time and change cannot diminish:

Even the old folks never knew
Why they call it like they do...
Copper head, copper beech
Copper kettles sitting side by each
Copper coll, cup o’Georgia peach...
I tried to go back, as if I could
All spec house and plywood
Tore up and tore up good
Down on copperline
It doesn’t come as a surprise to me
It doesn’t touch my memory....

The lyrical recreation of place through photograph, story, poetry; the passing on of knowing, of wisdom, of experience — in the pages that follow, enjoy the evocative notes North Carolinians offer. “One place understood,” Welty wrote, “helps us understand all places better.” It could also be said that one story helps us understand all stories better.

The metaphor may be “a community with a river in its soul,” as Zerwick writes, or the lingering, resonant thrum of a violin, or a library of treasured books. As with 2010 Caldwell Laureate Fred Chappell’s eulogy “Forever Mountain,” we need those places where “voices out of time” can come into our heads “like bees to the bee-tree-crown,/ The voices of former life as indistinct as heat.” Story and place — we need their harmony lest we feel, as one young voice within these pages explains, like “a person without a home...like an angel without wings or a sword.”
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North Carolina Humanities Council Celebrates Fred Chappell
as the 2010 Caldwell Laureate

ON FRIDAY, October 8, 2010, in the University of North Carolina at Greensboro’s School of Music Recital Hall, author and educator Fred Chappell accepted the North Carolina Humanities Council’s highest honor, the John Tyler Caldwell Award for the Humanities.

Fred Chappell inspires eloquence among his friends and colleagues. Michael Parker speaks of his “fierce and idiosyncratic vision of time, place, and consciousness.” Ed Southern writes that Chappell is “the Sherlock Holmes of writers: he notices things that others don’t, makes connections that others don’t.” Lee Smith calls him “our resident genius, our shining light.”

Chappell, born in Canton, North Carolina, earned graduate and undergraduate degrees at Duke University and for forty years taught at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where he helped establish the M.F.A. Writing Program, now considered one of the finest in the nation. Parker writes, “What makes Fred such a stellar teacher is the fact that he’s such a stellar student. He is intellectually curious — voracious might be the better word — and though he is certainly erudite and deeply and widely read, his authority is of the quiet stripe, always accommodating and generous.”

Chappell has received the O. Max Gardner Award, the highest honor the University of North Carolina system can bestow on a faculty member, and in 1988 was appointed the Burlington Industries Professor of English. In 1999 UNCG established the Fred Chappell Creative Writing Fellowship.

Author of over two dozen books of poetry, fiction, and criticism, Chappell served as the Poet Laureate of North Carolina from 1997–2002 and was inducted into the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame in 2006. Among Chappell’s awards are the Sir Walter Raleigh Prize, the Prix de Meilleur des Livres Étrangers (Best Foreign Book Prize) from the Académie Française, the North Carolina Award in Literature, and an Award in Literature from the National Institute of Arts and Letters. For his poetry he has received the Aiken Taylor Prize, Yale University’s Bollingen Prize, and the Roanoke-Chowan Poetry Prize eight times over. Chappell is also the recipient of the North Caroliniana Society Award, the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, the Ragan-Rubin Award, the Thomas Wolfe Prize, and the Zoë Kincaid Brockman Award. Recently, he was a visiting scholar in the North Carolina Humanities Council’s Teachers Institute Appalachian Voices.
Chappell’s latest books are *Shadow Box*, a collection of poetry, and *Ancestors and Others*, a volume of new and previously published short stories. His work has been translated into many languages, including Finnish, Arabic, Hindi, Chinese, and Farsi. Chappell’s voice, his vision, and his exploration of place reach far beyond his native Appalachia.

At the 2010 Caldwell Award celebration the Touring Theatre of North Carolina (TTNC) performed an original stage adaptation drawn from the poetry and prose of Fred Chappell. *Ole Fred Speaks of Family* was written by Brenda Schleunes, TTNC’s founder and producing artistic director. The cast included Sarah Hillenbrand and Dan A.R. Kelly (pictured), Drew Dupont, and Betsy Brown, with music by Wayne Seymour and Dave Fulton. Photo by Read Creations.

**Works by Fred Chappell**

**Fiction**
- *It Is Time, Lord* (1963)
- *The Inkling* (1965)
- *Dagon* (1968)
- *The Gaudy Place* (1972)
- *Moments of Light* (1980)
- *I Am One of You Forever* (1985)
- *Brighten the Corner Where You Are* (1989)
- *Farewell, I’m Bound to Leave You* (1996)
- *Look Back All the Green Valley* (1999)

**Nonfiction**
- *Caldwell Laureates*

**Poetry**
- *The World Between the Eyes* (1971)
- *The Man Twice Married to Fire* (1977)
- *River: A Poem* (1975)
- *Bloodfire: A Poem* (1978)
- *Wind Mountain* (1979)
- *Awakening to Music* (1979)
- *Source* (1985)
- *First and Last Words* (1989)
- *C: 100 Poems* (1993)
- *Shadow Box: Poems* (2009)

THE JOHN TYLER CALDWELL AWARD FOR THE HUMANITIES, the Council’s highest honor, has been presented annually since its inauguration in 1990. Named for its first recipient, the late John Tyler Caldwell, former chancellor of North Carolina State University from 1959–1975 and a founding member of the Humanities Council, the award pays tribute to individuals whose life and work illuminate one or more of the multiple dimensions of human life where the humanities come into play: civic, personal, intellectual, and moral.

1990 – John Tyler Caldwell†
1991 – John Hope Franklin†
1992 – Doris Waugh Betts
1993 – Samuel Talmadge Ragan†
1994 – Anne Firor Scott
1995 – John Marsden Ehle
1996 – William W. Finlator†
1997 – Charles Bishop Kuralt†
1998 – Dorothy Spruill Redford
1999 – William C. Friday
2000 – Thomas J. Lassiter, Jr.†
2001 – Houston Gwynne (H.G.) Jones
2002 – Reynolds Price†
2003 – Wilma Dykeman† & Hugh Morton†
2004 – Mary Duke Biddle Trent Semans
2006 – Benjamin Eagles Fountain, Jr.
2007 – Emily Herring Wilson
2008 – Walt Wolfram
2009 – Marsha White Warren
2010 – Fred Chappell†

†deceased
An Ode to “Ole Fred”

Becky Anderson

Becky Anderson of Asheville presented the Caldwell Award to her brother Fred Chappell. Her remarks follow.

WITHOUT A DOUBT this is one of those joyous moments in a lifetime, and it is my honor to be a part of this evening at the request of Fred that I share in this special moment with him.

However, Fred, be careful what you wish for. There are a lot of stories I could tell — about growing up on a small “scratch ankle” farm where we roamed pastures together with our dog Trixie — about splashing in the “creek,” where afterwards you would pull the leeches off me.

And other memories: Like the time you played Tarzan in the willow trees and didn’t make it from one tree to the other, tumbling to the ground flat on your back which knocked the breath out of you. I thought that you were dead! Experimenting with your new chemistry set and blowing up the Mason jars grandmother used for canning And the many more memories that became a part of your writings reflecting the voice of family and the voice of our mountains.

As I thought about and struggled with this introduction, I read Michael Parker’s description of you from his insight as a fellow writer and colleague, which I found most appropriate. He says, “What makes Fred such a stellar teacher…is the fact that he is such a stellar student.” He goes on to say: “I am willing to bet that Fred would rather be called a teacher as opposed to professor…and this is fitting….I have never heard him profess anything. His method of transmitting knowledge is through inquiry and conversation.”

And Fred came by it honestly. He came from a family of teachers. Our mother, father, aunts on both sides of the family, and our grandmother — they all were teachers. Much of his writing reflects the influence of our grandmother Davis, a legend in her own time. She took the first census in Madison County and reminded us that the number of horses, cows, and pigs were counted as important as the number of people — for they were the county’s true wealth. She oversaw most community events and at the age of twenty-eight, she was yet to be married — a “spinster” for her day.

Then she met our granddaddy, who in her own words was “the straightest standing man I ever saw.”

Our grandmother Davis was so independent that she chose to drive her own horse and buggy in their wedding. Fred captures the moment of her final decision to marry in his poem “My Grandmother Washes Her Vessels”:

I never said this to a soul, I don’t
Know why…I told my papa, ‘please hitch me
The buggy Sunday noon. I can drive
Myself to my own wedding’…
...My heart came to my throat.
I suppose I must have wept. And then I heard
A yellowhammer in a willow tree
Just singing out, ringing like a dance-fiddle
Over the gurgly-river sound, just singing
To make the whole world hush to listen to him
And then my tears stopped dropping down, and I touched
Nellie with the whip, and we crossed over.

Ours was a household of inquiry, of prodding and challenges. Supper would begin at 6:30, and often we would still be at the table at 9:00 listening to the events of the day, our parents discussing business and daddy querying us about the news on TV or in the newspaper. The earliest presidential debate I remember was the year that Dwight Eisenhower ran against Adlei Stevenson. Daddy would lean back in his chair, roll and light a cigarette in one hand as he took on the role of Eisenhower. Fred was Adlei Stevenson. Their debate continued throughout the campaign. To this day, no other presidential campaign comes close to that debate. Even today it is our greatest delight to gather around the table with good food, wine, and lengthy conversation. Childhood memories do become lifelong habits.

Not only was our house filled with inquiry and debate, it was also filled with pranks and mischief. Many of these fill the pages of Fred’s books. But the most memorable prank that was played was also the most life-changing for Fred. It occurred my senior year in high school during a sleep-over
with four of my best girlfriends, one of them named Susan Nicholls. We had gone to the movies, and while we were there, Fred and Daddy decided to sew our pajamas together using my grandmother’s sewing machine. Upon returning home and getting ready for bed, we discovered we could not get into our pajamas! So while the rest of us mumbled and grumbled as we tried to pick the stitches apart, Susan picked up her pajamas and stomped into the living-room, hands on her hips, demanding an explanation. To this day, I have determined that at that moment Fred fell head-over-heels in love with her, and he has never recovered. On the recent celebration of their fiftieth wedding anniversary, he lovingly wrote a two-part poem. The first part is about their first fifty years:

We have, dear love, come so far together
That when I turn to look I cannot see
The day or hour our shadows did not touch

The second part is for their one hundred year’s anniversary:

And age does not turn everything to ash
And love makes short work of a century

Fred’s work, whether it is poetry, short stories, or novels, is set in the mountains of Western North Carolina. It is the language of the tenants on our farms, the storekeepers, relatives who came to visit — and who often stayed longer than they should have. It is the language of neighbors who loved to gossip but were always there in a time of need to “holpen” you out.

I leave you with a poem that reflects both of Fred’s voices — the voice of family and the voice of the mountains. It was written after our father’s death, and is an eloquent eulogy about his eternal life in our mountains.

Forever Mountain
J.T. Chappell, 1912–1978

Now a lofty smoke has cleansed my vision.
I see my father has gone to climb
Easily the Pisgah slope, taking the time
He’s got a world of, making spry headway
In the fresh green mornings, stretching out
Noontimes in the groves of beech and oak.
He has cut a walking stick of second-growth hickory
And through the amber afternoon he measures
Its shadow and his own shadow on a sunny rock.
Not marking the hour, but observing
The quality of light come over him.
He is alone, except what voices out of time
Come to his head like bees to the bee-tree crown,
The voices of former life as indistinct as heat.

By the clear trout pool he builds his fire at twilight,
And in the night a granary of stars
Rises in the water and spreads from edge to edge.
He sleeps, to dream the tossing dream
Of the horses of pine trees, their shoulders
Twisting like silk ribbon in the breeze.
He rises glad and early and goes his way,
Taking by plateaus the mountain that possesses him.

My vision blurs blue with distance,
I see no more.
Forever Mountain has become a cloud
That light turns gold, that wind dislimns.

And now, I present to you the 2010 Caldwell Award laureate, Fred Chappell.
When Christine Rucker and I first thought about documenting the life of the Yadkin River, we imagined an epic journey, beginning at the river’s source high in the Blue Ridge Mountains and ending where the river meets the Uwharrie River and its name changes to the Pee Dee. From there it’s 225 miles to the sea. Other writers and photographers have made this journey. And countless others have loaded up canoes and headed south on unrecorded voyages. I loved the idea of adventure — a kind of Thelma and Louise meets Huck Finn. We would begin among rapids and mountain laurel, paddle lakes and black water, perhaps as far as the vast low country of South Carolina where the Yadkin-Pee Dee empties into the ocean. Who knew what we would find along the way?

But Christine and I realized we wanted to tell a more intimate story. We didn’t want to stop for an hour and paddle on. We wanted to linger. So we stayed close to home — in and around East Bend, Rockford, Siloam, and a place called the Shallow Ford — on a journey that nonetheless took us to distant places and back in time through the stories people told us.

At Donnaha Park, a county park where NC 67 crosses the river from Forsyth into Yadkin County, I heard stories that took me to Mexican towns and dusty ranches. In the last ten years, this county park has become a popular gathering place for recent Hispanic immigrants, who come here on summer weekends with their families to play soccer, picnic, and swim. We met a woman there named Sandra and her three daughters — Marisol, Judith, and Jessica. Sandra grew up near the town of Santo Domingo, Mexico, a good five-hour trip from Acapulco.

With Marisol translating, Sandra told me about her youth. There was no water on her family’s ranch, so the family dug for water with a hollowed-out “piece of fruit” fashioned into a spade. Some years, the crops failed, and there was nothing to eat. Sandra’s mother had nineteen children, but only nine survived infancy. In 1993 Sandra came to North Carolina and stayed. Until recently, she’d always been able to send money home to her mother, but the work has slowed down and some days she thinks of moving back to her family’s parched ranch — except at least here there’s plenty of water.

Sandra’s story, more than any, speaks to why the river is so important to all of us. In other parts of the world, people scramble for clean drinking water. They haul it from dirty cisterns. They dig in dry ground. They fight bitter wars. Here more than 1.5 million of us drink from the Yadkin — without a thought or a prayer.

Christine and I learned of other ways in which the Yadkin sustains us. Congregations still go down to the river for baptisms, finding more spirit in the fast water than they would inside brick and mortar churches. The river makes for rich farmland. And it provides comfort to those who cherish the quiet found by the water’s edge on a summer’s night.

The first time we met Jack Dobson, he drove us down to the river through a friend’s pasture, towing his flat-bottom boat behind us. We saw wild turkeys and later learned
A River of the People: A Common Thread
Shelley Crisp

IN JUNE 2009 the North Carolina Humanities Council funded “Yadkin River Story: A River of the People,” a multimedia project about the communities in rural Surry, Yadkin, and Forsyth counties whose lives are linked together by the Yadkin River. Through audio, photography, and written words, the project’s purpose, according to project director and Riverkeeper Dean Naujoks, is to document how people from different backgrounds experience the river, and through these stories reveal a deeper understanding of what the river means to the entire region. The project is sponsored by the Yadkin Riverkeeper, an organization whose mission is “to respect, protect, and improve the Yadkin Pee Dee River Basin through education, advocacy, and action. It is aimed at creating a clean and healthy river that sustains life and is cherished by its people.”

The Yadkin River Story project proposal explained:

A generation ago, the Yadkin River ran swift and deep. It fueled the region’s industry and growth asking little in return. Today, drought conditions across the Southeast and a power struggle over water rights to the river have forced the region to stop taking its water for granted. The stakes are high, but for most of its course, the river flows unnoticed by the communities it nourishes. A strong humanities project can change that. Facts and figures speak to the environmental perils. But stories, images, and words, reveal a more complex relationship between the river and its people....The Yadkin Riverkeeper, an organization committed to the river’s protection, believes in the power of stories and images to build a community of people who value and understand the river and through their stories re-awaken an interest in the river within the broader public [and tell] a complex story about the region’s growth and tensions, its history and its future, with a river as the common thread. We would not be here in the Yadkin River Valley without the river.

The photographs by award-winning Christine Rucker bring to life the stories of people for whom the river is part of their everyday existence. The photographs on the site are spectacular, capturing the amazing beauty, the personal connection and the raw power of the river. Naujoks’ hope is that “Yadkin River Story” will engage a wider audience who will come to appreciate the need to protect this important natural resource most of us take for granted.

Visit www.yadkinriverstory.org for the most up-to-date details of the project.
about the yellow river catfish once so plentiful in these waters until the flat-head channels and blues were introduced. Jack’s boat has a small outboard engine that he’s rigged up with an old pitchfork to protect the blades from rocks in the shallow waters. We motored upstream to the mouth of the Fisher, cut the engine and sat in silence. In Jack’s world the river belongs to all of us — or should. “Some of the old farmers that lived here when I moved here, they were some of the best people in the world,” Jack told us. “They’d let you use their land as long as you were responsible and didn’t mess it up.”

Jack also taught us how the river draws people together in community. He once had a place on the water, across from Rockford in an unincorporated part of Yadkin County known as Barney Hill. When he first moved in, he found two women fishing from his bank. They lived up the hill and were accustomed to setting up their lawn chairs there and staying for the afternoon. That was fine with Jack. After all, he believes that the river belongs to all of us, regardless of who happens to own the riverbank.

Someone suggested that we interview a woman named Lillian Satterfield. Christine and I sat in Lillian’s living room one afternoon, in the house where her parents raised a family of eight and often took in nephews and nieces so that they could go to school in Barney Hill. She told us about how her family valued education, in spite of the farm work that always needed doing. She told us about her friendship with the farm family next door, and how it didn’t matter that they were white and she was African American. She told us, too, about leaving home for college, moving to Baltimore to teach, and coming home to help her parents, about how she earned a master’s degree from Appalachian State University and ended up as an administrator at Surry Community College. She talked a lot about her mother, Mamie Sales Carter, who lived to be a hundred. And then she mentioned that her mother loved to fish from the riverbank, down the hill, and we realized she was part of Jack’s world — a community with a river in its soul.

We found other communities carved out by river currents. We found
communities of faith. We found farming communities and came to understand the warm but uneasy relationships among landowners and tenant farmers. And through them, we found new ways of telling stories.

We had planned to introduce the project “Yadkin River Story: A River of the People” with an exhibit of photographs and explanatory text. But then we thought, “Why wait?” The Internet is an instant venue for a work-in-progress. We launched a blog in October 2009, using it to tell some of the stories we were collecting and show some of the photographs. Along the way we also realized that the sounds we heard along the river — children screeching in play, the gentle splash as a paddle hits the water, and the pure sound of a hymn sung outdoors — were as important as the words and the images.

WFDD, the public radio affiliate in Winston-Salem, agreed to collaborate with us on a series of radio stories, which were broadcast in April 2010. Producer Kathryn Mobley edited the raw audio and with great patience taught me to read for a radio audience. Christine and I learned that it’s one thing to set up a blog and quite another to build an interactive website. M Creative, a design firm in Winston-Salem, developed a website that uses a map of the river to navigate the site. After working with WFDD, I understood that we needed expert help to finish editing the sound. Michelle Johnson, our sound editor, found poetry I had not heard in the rambling interviews we recorded.

Christine began the project thinking she would focus her work on the people we met along the way. She soon came to think of the river as a character, with many faces. She photographed the river at dawn and at dusk, from high up in a helicopter and from water level, perched on a kayak.

On September 18 “Yadkin River Story” opened in the new Yadkin Cultural Arts Center, with the portraits in black-and-white and landscapes printed in color on two-foot long panels. Hundreds of people came. They saw a piece of themselves hanging on the wall and in the background heard the river sounds, its human voices and its own. The “Yadkin River Story” is now on display in the gallery of the Sawtooth School for Visual Art in Winston-Salem until the end of March 2011.

I started teaching first-year writing at Wake Forest University last year and...
used the Yadkin River as the organizing theme. My students researched archaeological studies on the Native Americans who settled along the river 12,000 years ago. They read the words of early Moravian settlers, drawn here by the abundance of water and game. And they found first-hand accounts of the great floods of 1916 and 1940. I wasn’t sure whether the river would hold their attention for a full semester. In the end they learned invaluable lessons about vivid language, about writing in an authentic voice and digging deep for answers. “I owe my lessons learned in writing to the Yadkin River,” one of my students wrote. “Although it twists and turns, the river showed me that writing is at its best when it sounds clear, clear as a river.”

Christine lives on a bluff overlooking the Yadkin with a view of Pilot Mountain through the trees at the very spot where the river changes its eastward course and heads south. This part of the river’s story dates back millions of years, when the Blue Ridge Mountains rose from the earth, and left crevices for the river and its tributaries to follow. A creek runs through Christine’s land, and from there you can take a kayak a few hundred feet to where the still water empties into the river. The Yadkin, wide and rocky here, is a wild place, nothing like the muddy water most people see when they cross the river on the interstate heading west from Winston-Salem. She lives with the river every day and has paddled more than I, but we have both heard the river speak to us this year in ways we would not have understood a year ago. We know now how a kingfisher darts along the surface. We know the chorus of frogs. We know its silence. And we know how far we can travel by staying close to home.

Visit www.yadkinriverstory.org to listen to interviews and view more photographs. Visit www.yadkinriverkeeper.org/programs/yadkin-river-story to find a chronology of the current legal proceedings regarding the licensing of Yadkin River water rights.
PHOEBE ZERWICK

I TEACH the craft of writing to college freshmen at Wake Forest University, where I am a lecturer in the English Department. I also teach journalism. And I continue to write about the issues that matter to me, for magazines, foundations, nonprofits and businesses, in the belief that stories told with passion and honesty can change lives. My journalistic work has been recognized by the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University, Investigative Reporters and Editors, the Society of Professional Journalists, Columbia University, and the North Carolina Press Association and featured in the HBO documentary *The Trials of Darryl Hunt*. Ultimately, as with “Yadkin River Story,” my goal is to tell complex stories in human terms.  

www.phoebezerwick.com

CHRISTINE RUCKER

I CONSIDER MYSELF not only a visual storyteller, but also a documentarian for the community around me. I feel the job of a photojournalist is to hold up a reflection of the community. We do not set up or detour the natural flow around us. We photograph people in their true character, and in our photographs you can see the honesty of who they are.

The project “Yadkin River Story: A River of the People” was a perfect opportunity to tap into what I love to do. I was a photojournalist with the *Winston-Salem Journal* for ten years before leaving to pursue a freelance career in 2002. As a freelance photographer, I have found that it is possible to tell a story without words.  

www.christinerucker.com

DEAN NAUJOKS

AS A RIVERKEEPER in North Carolina for nine years, on both the Neuse and the Yadkin Rivers, and as an environmental advocate for more than twenty years, I have frequently met people who use our rivers everyday and have a deep appreciation about their health and well-being. These people serve as a source of inspiration in my continuing effort to save our rivers and the life that depends on them.

A major benefit of being the Riverkeeper is that people want to share their stories with me. They tell me about the conditions of the river years ago or show me their favorite place along the river. I always enjoyed these stories, but regretted that I was often the only person who heard them. The Yadkin River project and the multimedia site created for it gives those stories to everyone.  

www.yadkinriverkeeper.org
Fisher River: Currents of Faith

A HANDFUL OF CHURCHES in the Yadkin River Valley prefer the cool waters of the river and its tributaries to an indoor baptistery. Members of the Bear Creek Baptist Church meet at the Fisher River to celebrate the public proclamation of the faith.

When you gather that many people from a church around the river bank and you have four or five people down in the water and you’re doing a baptizing, I believe that everyone believes we’re closer to the story of Jesus’ baptism. You’re out in the middle of nature. It’s God’s creation and you’re being baptized in a river, something that man didn’t make….It’s something that the Lord put there….It’s our piece of the world.

~ The Reverend Dan Buie
Siloam: A Farming Life

MARION VENABLE’S FAMILY has farmed along the Yadkin River for more than a century. For years, they relied on tenant farmers like John Mitchell to plant and harvest crops. Today, Marion’s son, Ben, carries on the family tradition.

When I hear the train whistle, I know that at least a little part of the rural life still exists, because so many facets of it have disappeared. When I hear that, I think, yes, there is still something that’s the way it’s always been. And I love that.

~ Marion Venable

The thing about it, I know what work is. I grewed up real hard and work don’t bother me. Anything I do, I’m going to do it right.

~ John Mitchell

My first phrase as a child was, “I want to ride, ride tractor.” Any time the tractor cranked, I was there. I was on it.

~ Ben Venable

There are a lot of places to live but there’s a uniqueness to living near a body of water. I wouldn’t be anywhere else.

~ Marion Venable
Donnaha: Family Time

ON WARM SUMMER WEEKENDS the region’s most recent immigrants gather with their families at Donnaha Park in Yadkin County, a place that reminds many of home.

To her water is really precious….When she was a little kid, she never played around a river….it was a long way to walk or drive to get to a river….The river is like an open place where everybody can go and have a good time and there’s different people and different cultures. You can meet people and friends can get together. Being together is unique — I think it doesn’t really matter what your skin color is — it’s what you feel inside.

~ Marisol says of her mother Sandra
Lewis Fork: A River's Soul

MONTIE HAMBY grew up in the Lewis Fork community in Wilkes County and has made the Yadkin his life's work. In 1984 he organized the Yadkin Pee Dee River Trail Association, which provides access to paddlers along the full length of the river. He remains a river advocate and paddler.

Why are rivers important? Because they speak to you. Lots of times [as a child] I went to the river just to be at the river — to look and see if you could see a beaver, see if you could see a muskrat or catch fish bait. If I live to be 1,000, I’d never stop being thrilled when I see a great blue come off the water.

~ Montie Hamby

I get a paddle and I don’t have to be somewhere at a certain time, and I’m not there to go eight miles or ten miles or five or six miles. I’m just where I’m at….It’s a matter of just being and letting everything come into you and everything go out of you. It’s one place where I really feel at peace.

~ Montie Hamby
of thirteen days and 240 miles that changed my life forever.

Around every bend was a surprise. From branches forming a canopy overhead to fallen trees creating an impasse in the water, from wildflowers arranged in bouquets no florist could match, to rocks and boulders upstream that defined the meaning of whitewater, everything was beautiful, so very beautiful. Occasionally the water was marred by trash.

Adventure? There was adventure. There was the day it rained and rained and the fear that hypothermia had set in. There was the encounter with people partying, their rifles not far from their piles of empty beer cans. It was a paddle-faster moment.

My canoe got wedged between rocks and stuck on a log, but every moment was a joyful moment — including unplanned swims through and under a birch tree. Huge cypresses towered like skyscrapers. I sighted an eagle and egret, Canada geese and the little yellow warbler, and butterflies floating in air as I floated on water.

There was the wonder of witnessing the river transition from a stream to immense wideness, the friendly waves from people on passing
vessels, the crazy men in a bass boat screaming by as they threw out an empty Gatorade bottle, and the conversations with locals who loved the river but feared for its future.

And there was that moment Neuse River #1 came into view. Journey complete.

When I said I was ready to do it all over again, a friend asked, “Wouldn’t that be boring?” My friend missed the whole point of my journey.

If anyone understands rivers, it is Dude Andrews. He sits on an empty upside-down five-gallon bucket on the banks of the Trent River. Fishing with a pole crafted from the branch of a tree, he says, “I’ve caught a nice perch for my supper.”

Dude Andrews represents the real connection between a man and the natural world. He does not own a multimillion-dollar yacht, an expensive powerboat, or even a performance canoe. He does not wear designer apparel purchased from a chic store for the outdoorsman. He loves being on the river, whether he snags a perch or not.

For the thrill seeker, Tom Cruise in Top Gun pales in comparison to a pelican dive-bombing the river’s surface to snatch a finger mullet. For those with an ear for fine music, Leonard Bernstein could not replicate the symphony of waterfowl. For the mood created by Stephen Spielberg, nothing matches just floating on the water’s surface, drifting through smoke rising from the calm chill of an early morning.

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**How to Sponsor a Road Scholars Program**

**AN APPLICATION TO APPLY** for a Road Scholars program can be found at www.nchumanities.org. Questions about applying for a program or becoming a Road Scholar should be directed to Carolyn Allen at (336) 256-0140 or callen@nchumanities.org.
The “Third Place”:
North Carolina Libraries
Mary L. Boone

Mary L. Boone was appointed State Librarian of North Carolina in November 2005. A division of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, the State Library of North Carolina is the principal library of state government and the home of the North Carolina Center for the Book.

**EVERY TIME** I visit a public library in North Carolina I am struck by the important role it plays in its community. The public library provides the community with the so-called “third place,” a term used for the concept of a neutral place for all people in the community to gather and engage, separate from the two usual environments of home and the workplace. In his influential book *The Great Good Place*, Ray Oldenburg argues that the third place is important for democracy, for civil society, for civic engagement, and for establishing feelings of a sense of place. New library buildings offer a unique sense of place for a community, often reflecting, architecturally, the history and culture of the regions they serve. Inside the building, people of all ages from all parts of the community gather information or reading materials or attend programs. Public libraries enrich lives in myriad ways, beyond the simple act of checking out books.

The library is a place where parents select picture books to read to their toddlers; where children experience not only the joy of reading but also their first encounter with civic responsibility; where teens can safely congregate with books and resources created especially for them; where students can do their homework after school, where home schoolers can have a library at all; and where seniors can learn to use electronic resources. The library is a place where what is found is always more than what was expected and where new worlds of learning are abundant and never-ending.

There are those who say that with the advent of the Internet, we no longer need libraries. In reality, public libraries are more important than ever. In these difficult economic times, in spite of reduced hours and fewer staff, public library use is at an all-time high. We live in an online world where one must have a computer to find job listings and to apply for a job; to apply for online e-Government services; to apply to college; to do homework; and to find much of the information needed for daily life. Public access computers in our libraries are the lifeline for those who do not have computers at home and a source of free wi-fi for those who do. Just as importantly, public libraries offer free classes in a wide range of computer skills, not only helping people find jobs but also making them more employable.

While the materials that are available in public libraries — books, DVDs, CDs, magazines, and newspapers — can be purchased elsewhere, North Carolinians have already paid through their local and state taxes for the right to have free access to these resources at their public libraries. Contrary to popular opinion, these
resources are controlled by copyright and are not usually fully available for free online. They are, however, available free to anyone in North Carolina with a library card through our statewide “virtual library” called NC LIVE (www.nclive.org). What libraries offer that cannot be purchased at a bookstore or through online vendors is the expert assistance that library staff provides — helping library users apply for jobs or government services online, finding information for homework assignments, or just helping a reader to locate a good book.

As the medium upon which human knowledge is recorded has evolved, libraries have also been changing and evolving since the Library of Alexandria housed papyrus scrolls. We expect that over the next decade libraries will continue to evolve as electronic book readers become more popular and as more information is digitized. The State Library of North Carolina, for example, is a major contributor to the digitization of unique North Carolina materials by sponsoring the North Carolina Digital Heritage Center (www.digitalnc.org), which works with cultural heritage institutions across North Carolina to digitize and publish historic materials online. The Digital Heritage Center provides libraries, archives, museums, historic sites, and other cultural heritage institutions with the opportunity to publicize and share their rare and unique collections online. In addition, the State Library and State Archives, both divisions of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, have come together to create the joint North Carolina Digital Collections project (www.digital.ncdcr.gov).

The goal of the Digital Collections project is to combine the Library’s published resources and the Archive’s original documents, thus giving users a more streamlined experience when searching for digital images, publications, or other documents housed at the Department of Cultural Resources.

Even as more and more resources become accessible online, the circulation of books in our public libraries continues to grow, having increased by more than 15% over the past five years. With more than seventeen million printed books available in public libraries in North Carolina, it is highly unlikely that books as we know them will disappear any time soon. And today, more than ever, public libraries serve as community centers, offering services and programs and meeting spaces for their residents — as that “third place” in which cultures and communities can reside and thrive.

How to Sponsor a Let’s Talk About It Program

AN APPLICATION TO APPLY for a Let’s Talk About It book, poetry, or film library discussion series may be found at www.nchumanities.org. Questions about applying for or planning a program may be directed to Carolyn Allen at (336) 256-0140 or callen@nchumanities.org.

Since 1999 the North Carolina Center for the Book and the North Carolina Humanities Council have partnered to manage the Let’s Talk About It project in North Carolina. The North Carolina Center for the Book, an affiliate of The Center for the Book at the Library of Congress, promotes reading and lifelong learning for North Carolinians of all ages.
MY COUSIN AND I must have been nine or ten, in those years when waitresses still mistook me for a boy or him for a girl or the two of us for siblings. We played separate, parallel games in the pasture below our Nanny’s house. Now and then one of us would call out to the other or trot past, but mostly we played alone. He tossed a persimmon at me, half-heartedly or distractedly, and it splattered on the oak tree next to me. “Missed me,” I called, and he turned as he ran and stuck out his tongue. The flesh of the persimmon, stringy and seedy, caught on the tree bark and clung, blood-orange-red, like a badge.

Dean moved behind a swell of hill, and I saw our mother’s mother wipe away the steam from the kitchen window, her hand moving in circles. I half-waved back to her. The clear November sunlight threatened to cut you, mow you down, slice right through you. The snakes and bugs had gone to ground or died, and I stepped into the woods, down by the creek where the cattle watered. It seemed impossibly small there, like a fairy tale, and I knelt on moss as fine as hair and dipped my hands into the cool water. I rinsed my face and hands with it, under the branches of a tall cedar. I crawled underneath, into a sort of room, carpeted with dried cedar, and leaned my back against the trunk. The air felt dry and used-up in my nostrils and mouth, with the brittle texture of old newspapers.

I’ve tried and tried to get through to you, but it’s hard, from this side, to get any kind of message to you, because my voice garbles and encrypts. One of the inconveniences of being dead is that you lose intention, have lost the power of will. I watched in horror that afternoon, as you played near the stream, and I hoped you wouldn’t hear, that you wouldn’t look, or that you’d remember it only as a nightmare. A child shouldn’t see such things, even necessary things, but somehow children will.

I looked downstream, past the persimmons, and something caught my eye. It hung in the oak, dead. It might have been an animal — do animals die in trees and then hang there? Maybe just a scrap of clothes. I felt suddenly hot, and my stomach clenched. I drew my legs under me and leaned forward, touched the ground with my fingertips, like a sprinter. I meant to run but didn’t. Instead I leaned there, poised, and saw that man in the tree, a black man, his whole body up there, not just his clothes, and a kind of intuition crept into my bones, reptilian and unbidden. I knew that only I could see him, that even if anyone else looked, I wouldn’t be able to point him out.

One of the ways you could hurt yourself would be to go and stand, now, at the base of that hill, where you remember seeing your grandmother, canning her green beans and wiping her window, and where you remember the creek and the stand of trees. You could stand near where the cedar was, and the bright persimmon, and you could look for the oak. Now you would find just saplings bought at Lowe’s Hardware and landscaped in, their trunks taped and staked, standing in fescue, a sprinkler tick-tick-ticking past. If you stood there, you’d look for fresh water and find a storm drain, look for pasture and find quarter-acre rectangles, a 1500 square-foot two-story at the center of each.
In just such a way, I stood while you crouched under that cedar tree, and saw that time had changed the world, the three-hundred-acre plantation reduced to a fifty-acre farm with a Depression-era clapboard and a cattle barn behind.

Oaks hold their leaves longest, in the fall, and a few brown leaves still clung to this one, like brush strokes, a few on this limb, a few more on that one. The man would sway from the oak even when its last leaf fell, even when the new leaves pushed out next spring. He had already been there so long, might always be there. He wore a blue shirt, and the limpid sky behind him complemented it, as if an artist had arranged his wardrobe. The sun shone and a breeze moved the flayed shirt, a perfect day, but still he hung there, his feet bare and bloody. I don’t know how far up he was; his feet swung at least the height of a man from the ground. I couldn’t look away.

I want you to know that I wasn’t thinking of it as murder at the time. When I was there, part of it, I thought we were doing what had to be done.

He was there, his tongue swollen, dry, protruding. The next instant, only a rag of his shirt remained, caught on the branch. Over and over I re-membered him, putting him together and taking him apart, appearing and disappearing him. Even now, I rub the memory of him like a pebble in my pocket, like my tongue to the socket of a pulled tooth.

When I surrender to this memory, I top the ridge behind Nanny’s house, the grass tall and dry-grey, gone far, far to seed. Dean and I hunt for turkeys. My shotgun is an old poplar branch, with a fork in it braced against my shoulder and my finger on a twig nub. An abandoned school bus sags between cinder blocks, its windows open or broken, gaping, the paint faded but still yellow. We were only kids, and there were no wild turkeys to be shot with our wooden guns in 1970s Charlotte. Surely there was no bus, but still the memory climbs my spine, genuine as a serpent.

We hunted him. The image you saw — I’m sorry, child, I shouldn’t have let you go to that place, see those things — was not of us turkey hunting. You don’t hunt for turkeys from horseback. You hunt for men from horseback. It lifts you up, so that you can see someone crouching in the tall grass or lying behind a log. It lifts you up so that, when you find him, he knows that you are his superior.

We found him in just that way, at the top of the ridge, near where you remember the pines. There were none there in my time, and there are none there now. He had hidden in a low spot, hardly a hiding place at all, with nothing concealing him but
grassy and a short outcrop of rock. He stepped out, broad through the chest and strong, as if he had some right to be there, as if he were entitled. He stepped out as if he had been waiting for us.

I smell horse sweat and human terror. I observe that I could stop, if I wanted. I could wake myself from this, but that would not erase it. My desire, my fear, is immaterial.

We beat him before we took him back down the hill to hang him. Not in anger, mind you, which makes it somehow worse. If you do something repellent out of anger, even the law recognizes that your actions aren’t entirely under your control. We were not angry, and still the law would not have found in us any crime or wrong-doing. We beat him with a sense of duty, the way you might meet with your banker and then mark it off your agenda. It wasn’t something I looked forward to doing; it wasn’t something I hated, either.

We beat his back until his shirt hung in strips, and then until his flesh tore, as well. We beat the soles of his feet because he had used them to run. Think of that for a moment. The arch of your foot is as sensitive as the palm of your hand, even if you’re accustomed to going barefoot. He had been beaten before, and he was a strong man, but he screamed when we beat his feet, when the tiny bones crushed and broke and the skin began to bleed and swell.

Giddy terror whispers that neither a dream nor a fiction happened, that time folds and warps, laps and overlaps, that I see a reality. Out of my own darkness comes assurance that it all nestles in memory, not imagination. That the land itself holds it all, the tree and the stream and the rock where he hid, that those things vouchsafe his shirt and his feet. That I, myself, hold it all.

We threw him over my saddle, and my horse carried him down to the stand of trees where you played that day. In my time, it was a full forest, and we did our grim work at its edge. Now it lies buried under asphalt and fescue, cement and boxwoods, as if to nullify the past.

I would like to tell you that he did not know what was happening when we sat him up on my horse and put the rope around his neck, but even beaten, even barely conscious, he knew. He begged, and the women who had come, some of them his wife and daughters, I suppose, they begged for his life, too. I would also like to tell you that I tied the rope to the tree tightly out of mercy, and that I wanted to be certain it was over quickly for him. The truth is more matter-of-fact. I wanted it to be over because I had other business that afternoon, and would have to change my collar and go into town.

I splashed water on my face again, and washed my hands, and then I left the woods. I ran across the pasture and up the hill, to the house, to find my cousin, my grandmother, safety. If I did anything at all with what I saw, I wrote it off as one more imaginary venture, one more piece of evidence that I inhabited a reality separate from everyone else’s reality. One more piece of evidence, in other words, that left untethered, I might wander to places I didn’t want to go.

I remember the pond, further up the driveway, and how deeply dangerous it seemed, full of water moccasins, with sharp-nosed foxes stalking through the cattails. I remember mistletoe growing in the tops of the trees, up near the road, and my mother shooting sprigs of it down with a pistol at Christmas time. I remember thistles and daisies in the empty fields, sad-eyed cows in the pastures. I remember the smell of coffee steaming in brown Hull mugs, beige rims dripping down over brown bases. I remember the steamy kitchen and the table covered in jars of green
beans, vegetable soup, and pickled okra, all of them bright as jewels.

Sometimes, here on this side, I scream and scream, and this is why. I heard that man beg, and I heard the whip strike him, and I heard his children beg. I whipped my horse from under him. These things I did, and I can’t reverse them, can’t redeem them, must watch as they visit even you, the sixth generation, even your sons, who will be the seventh. I offered him no mercy. I accepted all of it as normal, as outside my concern. Hatred spilled and ran and pooled, and then seeped into the ground, like that man’s blood. We, the bodiless, cannot change, cannot erase, cannot absorb it. Jesus himself won’t change any of it without the hands — and the feet. Lord, the feet, too — the hands and feet of you who have flesh. You hold my redemption with your own.

My Nanny died in 1996. Dean and I have mortgages, lives, two children each. Where, now, is that man, with his bloody feet? What am I to do with him? The pond, the stream, the trees are gone, and the land lay buried by progress. Can I accept the cruel secret, carry it further, coiled at my navel, into the future? Or is there restitution to be made, redemption to be had? Can I take him down, now, and bathe and bandage and heal those feet? Can he be revived and returned to his family, freed again into that first generation into Canaan? If I confess this now, does it heal any of us? If I am a witness, removed only by time, can I cut the rope?

Unpave it and dig beneath, until you find the oak tree with its orange-red badge, and pull it out by the roots, even if it takes forever, generations of us strung together, past into future, toiling. Beg as we beg, here, for forgiveness, until guilt and forgiveness and mercy bind all of us together, bind the wounds that you inherit.

TRACI LAZENBY ELLIOT

TRACI LAZENBY ELLIOT grew up in Charlotte, North Carolina, and graduated from Washington and Lee University. Her work has appeared in More Lights than One, a volume of scholarly criticism of Fred Chappell’s prose, and her poetry in Lifting Women’s Voices, a book of prayers. “Legacy” is her first published work of fiction. Elliot, who lives in Asheboro, is the Director of Christian Formation at the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd.

I BEGAN “LEGACY” three years ago and returned to it from time to time, to turn it upside down and shake it. I’d begun to think nothing was ever going to come out of it. I changed the point of view, shifted the narrative structure, wrote it as a poem, considered that it might be a part of something else and considered that it might not become anything at all. I set it aside and hoped it would lead me to its own ending, and finally it did.

There’s an analogy between what we do to the land — carve it into uniform rectangles, pave over it, prune it into submission — and what we do to ourselves when we acknowledge only the bright, sparkling, powerful aspects of ourselves (or our ancestors) and ignore the cruelty and callousness of which we’re capable for the easy and convenient.

Part of defining ourselves includes defining our ancestors, I think, perhaps particularly here in the South. The truth of it is that we live with a heritage that includes hate and shame. Paving over that, disguising it with untruths because the truth makes us squirm, leaves us with an inauthentic landscape that can’t heal or feed us. When we pretend that our ancestors were somehow different from what they were, we deny their reality. We can’t afford to do that, because it denies our own reality, too.
I AM PLEASED AND HONORED to be asked to present the Linda Flowers Literary Award to this year’s recipient, Traci Lazenby Elliot, for “Legacy.” Legacy is an appropriate title for the story and an appropriate word for an evening that pays tribute to Fred Chappell, whose legacy fills this room and stretches across this state. But it’s the legacy of Linda Flowers that I want to address — what it means to be honored with this award in her name.

Those who knew Linda have never forgotten her spirit, her courage, and her devotion to the underserved and under-noticed people of this state. I never knew Linda. In fact, I’d never heard of Linda Flowers until I won the award a few years back. I didn’t know what I was in for then, but I realized quickly that being a Linda Flowers Literary Award winner must be a lot like being a beauty queen. In the year that follows the award, you get a lot of attention. You’re invited to a lot of places, like Winston-Salem, Chapel Hill, Asheville, Fountain, and Faison. You’ll get asked over and over, in the most unlikely places — like the grocery store, the post office, the library, church — if you knew Linda Flowers, and when you say, no, you never did, you’ll hear a story about her, almost always about what a presence she was and how passionately she believed in the people of North Carolina.

When your year is up, you’ll go back to your old life, but you’ll never be the same, because you have been infused with the spirit of Linda — her desire to tell the stories of those whose stories don’t get told, to give voice to those whose voices don’t get heard. The Linda Flowers Literary Award reminds us to do what Linda did, to look closely at ourselves as North Carolinians, at who we were, who we are, and who we can be.

Tonight’s prizewinning story, “Legacy,” by Traci Lazenby Elliot, is one Linda, I believe, would heartily applaud. It’s a beautifully crafted, hauntingly painful story of the legacy of land and loss of land. It’s the story of family then and family now. It’s a legacy of guilt for actions taken and decisions made in ignorance that will stay a part of who we are for generations and perhaps forever. It’s a plea for forgiveness and an acheing desire for peace. It’s a powerful story of change and the inability to change. It’s a story of us, as North Carolinians and as Southerners.
Linda Flowers Literary Award

THE NORTH CAROLINA HUMANITIES COUNCIL invites original, unpublished entries of fiction, nonfiction, or poetry for the 2011 Linda Flowers Literary Award. Submissions should celebrate excellence in the humanities and reflect the experiences of people who, like Linda Flowers, not only identify with North Carolina, its people and cultures, but also explore its problems and promises.

For complete submission guidelines and prize details, see the North Carolina Humanities website at www.nchumanities.org. Questions may be directed to executive director Shelley Crisp at (366) 334-5383 or scrisp@nchumanities.org.

DEADLINE: postmark date August 15, 2011.

The North Carolina Humanities Council was privileged to have Linda Flowers as one of its members from 1992 to 1998.

That my book about Eastern North Carolina might touch a chord with some people...I had not anticipated. What [they] are responding to in Threwed Away, I think, is its human dimension: the focus on real men and women having to make their way in the face of a changing, onrushing and typically uncaring world....This humanistic apprehension, I tell my students, is as necessary for living fully as anything else they may ever hope to have.

~ Linda Flowers, in a letter to the North Carolina Humanities Council Membership Committee, July 1992

2010 Selection Committee

MICHAEL CHITWOOD, department of English, UNC Chapel Hill

LINDA OXENDINE, professor emeritus UNC Pembroke, former director and curator of the American Resource Center, North Carolina Humanities Council trustee

BRIAN RAILSBACK, department of English and dean of the Honors College, Western Carolina University

SHARON RAYNOR, Johnson C. Smith Mott University Professor, department of English, Johnson C. Smith University

PREVIOUS RECIPIENTS

Karen Gilchrist 2001
   “The Cure”

Joseph Bathanti 2002
   “Land of Amnesia”

Heather Ross Miller 2003
   “Miss Jessie Dukes and Kid Heavy”

Barbara Presnell 2004
   “Sherry’s Prayer: NC Textiles 1967–2004”

Kermit Turner 2005
   “Tongue-Tied”

Kathy Watts 2006
   “Goin’ Fishin’”

Susan Weinberg Vogel 2007
   “The Pick-up Line”

Kristin Hemmy 2008
   “Carolina Landscapes: Poems”

Katey Schultz 2009
   “Amplitude”

Traci Lazenby Elliot 2010
   “Legacy”
Where Is Our Place in the World? Documenting Community Through Photography

Rob Amberg, an internationally recognized photographer and writer, is the recipient of numerous fellowships, grants, and awards from such organizations as the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, and the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University. Amberg lectures frequently and works closely with various nonprofits, including the North Carolina Humanities Council, for which he is a Road Scholar. He also was the Visiting Scholar for the 2010 Teachers Institute Summer Seminar follow-up workshop in February 2011. This article captures the essence of his presentation at that workshop.

EARLY IN HIS BOOK The Teachings of Don Juan, the anthropologist Carlos Castaneda recounted his arrival at Don Juan’s home, far out in the Sonoran desert in northern Mexico. He arrived hot, exhausted, and unsettled by the sparse surroundings. He dropped his belongings to the floor and himself in one of the two straight-backed chairs in the one-room house. Don Juan, a Yaqui Indian medicine man and teacher, promptly told him he couldn’t sit there. “Why not,” Castaneda inquires. “Because it’s not your spot,” he replied. “Where is my spot?” Castaneda asked. “That you must find yourself,” Don Juan answered and promptly left the room, leaving the anthropologist to grovel around the floor for the next couple of hours. When the seer finally returned he found Castaneda curled up in a corner of the room, asleep. “Well,” Don Juan said. “I see you found your spot.”

Castaneda wrote a number of books about this learned man, much of which was later revealed to be fiction. But this particular lesson speaks clearly to the general question we all wrestle with as people: Where is our place in the world? And, to the more specific question I, as a photographer and writer, ask every time I pick up my camera or pen: Where do I place myself to best convey the essence of a situation, a place, or a person? Photography is unique to the arts in its dependence on an external reality. You must have something to photograph. Documentary photography tells stories about people and places, and images should foremost be a representation of those subjects.

I think of my camera as a visual journal.

But what a photographer chooses to image is also a clear reflection of the photographer and the photographer’s concerns. Because my work is fundamentally “documentary,” believability is essential. My stories of evolution in Madison County, North Carolina, must contain elements of fact and truth; it must be believed. But I also recognize the personal and subjective in my work, the elements that come from my spot, and not yours.
A photograph’s frame is pre-determined by the camera and lens. Images can be manipulated effortlessly, but the photographer must still deal with what’s in his original negative. And what is in that negative is decided by where you stand and when you press the shutter. “Finding your spot” becomes the most elemental decision a photographer makes.

The making of photographs is a relationship between the photographer and the subject of the photograph. The photographer forms a unique bond with the subject that is trusting and collaborative, but also acquisitive and typing. While photographs are dependent on the relationship between the photographer and the subject, the showing of images in the form of publications and exhibits involves relationships with editors, curators, and ultimately, viewers. All bring their own “truth” to the reading of a photograph through their memories, prejudices, and understandings. Viewers bring ambivalence and a fresh eye that often enhances and expands the message in the photograph. Photographs encourage dialogue.

Photography, like music, is about time, and photography’s use of time is unique in the arts. Photographs stop time and provide us a memory of that particular moment, person, or place. And they do so with exquisite precision and detail. I think of my camera as a visual journal because pictures allow me to remember in far greater detail than my mind can process or my hand can write. Photographs allow us to recall the texture and shape of life, the relationship between our environment and us. Documenting the same place over a long period of time, and through the use of movement and blur, photographs also remind us that time, and situations, continue to evolve, allowing us to imagine what will come next.

When I am photographing in Madison County, I am reminded of two quotes. The first from Herman Melville reads, “It’s not down on any map. True places never are.” The second is from Alfred Korbinsky, “The map is not the territory.” Both help me understand that with any place, its truth lies unseen, below the surface, unmapped. It exists in memory, in stopped and moving time, deep in the shadows, and it must be sought out. There is another meaning for me in the quotes: there are few unmapped places left. Madison County has been mapped, surveyed, documented, and imagined for hundreds of years, and humans have been utilizing the land for thousands of years for food, shelter, and commerce. That knowledge puts my own thirty-seven years of documentation in Madison County in perspective and causes me to ask: at what point does this small spot in the landscape become my spot?
TEACHERS INSTITUTE SEMINARS FOSTER RESPECT, RENEWAL, AND REWARD

October 15–16, 2010 ~ Fall Seminar

Searching for the Real Thing in American Music ~ Mars Hill College
Lead Scholar: Benjamin Filene (UNC Greensboro, department of public history)

RESPECT It was refreshing to be able to share ideas and get different viewpoints and know that my ideas were valued and could stimulate further discussion.

RENEWAL I was a student again, taking care of my own learning so I could come back to the classroom on Monday morning looking through a new lens of renewal.

REWARD It is always good to gain new perspectives on a subject that has been covered so many times in my teaching area and make new friends in the teaching field.
2011 TEACHERS INSTITUTE SEMINARS

SPRING ~ March 25–26
NC’s Furniture Industry
High Point Museum, High Point
Lead Scholars: Bill Bamberger, teacher, photographer, author with Cathy Davidson of Closing: The Life and Death of an American Factory; Kenneth Zogry, historian and instructor, UNC Chapel Hill
Application Deadline: Feb. 11, 2011

SUMMER ~ June 19–24
NC Coastal Culture
Core Sound Waterfowl Museum, Harkers Island
Lead Scholars: Karen Amspacher, executive director, Waterfowl Museum; Barbara Garrity-Blake, anthropologist, teacher; Carmine Prioli, professor of English, NC State University
Application Deadline: April 15, 2011

FALL ~ October 14–15
NC in the American Revolution
NC Museum of History, Raleigh
Lead Scholar: Greg O’Brien, professor of history, UNC Greensboro
Application Deadline: June 30, 2011

Seminar details and application requirements can be found at www.nchumanities.org.

AlumNews

Nonya Brown-Chesney (Chatham County) has received a $2,000 grant from the Lois Lenski Covey Foundation for the SAGE Academy Media Center. Brown-Chesney will use these funds to purchase books.

Caroline Cordell Courter (Pender County) has received three grants to enhance curriculum for the 2010–2011 school year. These grants came from Intra Coastal Realty in Wilmington, from the Pender County Schools (a Family Involvement grant), and from Four County Electric (a Bright Ideas grant).

Jasmine L. Hart (Wake County) has been named to the Governor’s Teacher Advisory Committee.

Michelle Ray Hunt (Caldwell County) has successfully renewed her National Board Certification in Early Childhood through Young Adult Exceptional Needs Specialist.

Holly Jordan (Durham County) has received her National Board Certification in Adolescent/Young Adult English Language Arts.

Mark Meacham ( Alamance County) is pursuing a Ph.D. in Teacher Education at UNC Greensboro.

In 2010, he presented a seminar about the Elon University’s Teaching and Learning partnership at the University of Glasgow and The International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Liverpool.

Rebecca Meacham ( Alamance County) has received a Picturing America grant from the North Carolina Humanities Council. Her experience at Appalachian Voices (TI 2010 Summer Seminar), spurred her interest in pursuing this grant opportunity.

Kelly White Payne (Caldwell County) has received her National Board Certification in Adolescent/Young Adult English Language Arts.

Angela Taylor (Durham County) has been accepted into the North Carolina Kenan Fellows Program from NC State University. In addition, Taylor presented an interactive project-based lesson plan at the NC Science Teachers Association Conference in 2010.

Mary Kent Whitaker (Watauga County) was selected as a finalist for 2010 Northwest Region Teacher of the Year.

Tammy Young ( Buncombe County) has been accepted to participate in a 2011 NCCAT Scholars in Residence seminar. She will work with two of her colleagues to develop a high school teaching unit on Appalachian literature. This opportunity was fostered, in part, from Young’s participation in the 2010 Teachers Institute Summer Seminar Appalachian Voices.

Joy Kinley, a teacher at Starmount High School ( Yadkin County), completed three hours of graduate credit during the 2010 fall semester at UNC Greensboro based on her participation in the 2010 Teachers Institute Summer Seminar Appalachian Voices. Kinley is the first Teachers Institute alum to take advantage of this option through a partnership between the Teachers Institute and UNCG’s School of Education. She is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Education Leadership and Cultural Foundations.

TI ALUMS: Share your professional news. Send information to lynnwk@nchumanities.org.
The Melody Lingers On
Darrell Stover

“They call it that good ol’ mountain dew, and them that refuse it are few...”
~ Bascom Lamar Lunsford

THE CRATES ARE ALL PACKED
and shipped from the final Museum on Main Street (MoMS) site, the Don Gibson Theatre in Shelby. The interactive kiosks of New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music have moved on to be refitted for another state’s tour. For the six rural communities who in 2010 hosted our state’s first MoMS Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition and for the 30,000 North Carolinians who visited the exhibit throughout the tour, the excitement has come and gone. But the melody lingers on.

From the outset, MoMS participants established a strong camaraderie. Site hosts from the Mount Airy Museum of Regional History, Warren County Memorial Library, the Museum of the Albemarle, the Arts Council of Wayne County, Mars Hill College, and Destination Cleveland County gathered for a programming meeting in Greensboro in May 2009. They gathered again just days before the grand opening in Mount Airy in March 2010 to learn how to install the exhibit with assembly assistance from Smithsonian and Council staff.

Did New Harmonies help make the value of the humanities real in the eyes and ears of visitors, young and old? Did New Harmonies host sites fare well in presenting humanities-based programs exploring North Carolina’s roots music heritage? These are hard questions to answer because music is such an intimate expression of cultural and artistic identity. The nation’s roots music story can be conveyed quite well in exhibitions such as New Harmonies, but the challenge for host sites in North Carolina was to bring to life the regional parallel through complementary programming in the public humanities. New Harmonies participants accomplished this and more.

The humanities are embedded locally in the people — those who construct the instruments, write the lyrics, perform the songs. It is rooted also in those who research music history, who teach others to use musical instruments, and in the hearts of those who appreciate and document music. New Harmonies provided a way to underscore the humanities — the human element and the relationships created by music. Such an exhibition can demonstrate how one becomes interested in the banjo, gospel, dulcimer, or ballads. But ultimately the success of the experience depends on the depth of exploration, the execution of the project, the connection of the exhibition to community. The site hosts of New Harmonies can be proud that they contributed in a substantive way to the documentation and exploration of their region’s roots music heritage.

MoMS audiences and visitors experienced the rich diversity of North Carolina’s roots music heritage through innovative programming that complemented the exhibition such as Shelby’s Rhythms and Roots Run; scholarly presentations such as that on Round Peak-style fiddler Tommy Jarrell and jazz drummer Max Roach; and performances by wonderfully talented regional musicians and
vocalists like Stax Music R&B artist/jazz vocalist Melva Houston and Mandolin Orange. Other programs included Mount Airy’s Susan King, who told the story of her brother Ralph Epperson’s founding of WPAQ 740 AM. Since 1948 the “Voice of the Blue Ridge” has offered listeners old time music, bluegrass, and traditional gospel and continues to air the country’s third oldest live program of its type, the “Merry Go Round.”

Programming in Warrenton helped shed light on the almost lost story behind the significance of another legendary radio station, WVSP — “Voices Serving People” — co-founded by Valeria Lynch Lee, with Jereann King as a visionary program director between 1977 and 1985. Folklorist Mike Taylor shared with Warrenton some of his audio recordings of the area’s music makers and discussed with audiences the region’s roots music heritage, which includes gospel groups the Warrenton Echoes and the Royal Jubilee Singers. Warrenton’s musical showcase at the renovated Armory included those two groups and Haliwa-Saponi traditional songs, local bluegrass, blues, country and gospel music.

In connection with its exhibition, Elizabeth City displayed roots music artifacts from the collection of the Museum of the Albemarle. Elizabeth City State University’s Douglas Jackson led audiences in a close look at the jazz drumming innovations of Max Roach. Goldsboro’s art center exhibited the blues and gospel paintings of Spencer Lawrence and invited local blues and R&B performers to relate their lives in music through performance and storytelling.

Mars Hill presented and documented its master fiddlers Paul Crouch, Arvil Freeman, Bobby Hicks, and Roger Howell and connected the MoMS exhibition to its annual Bascom Lamar Lunsford Festival. The exhibition also featured documentary music-related photos of Sodom Laurel residents by Rob Amberg, an extensive display on the music heritage of Madison County, and opening and festival concerts that showcased the region’s traditional music heritage.

For its grand opening, Shelby invited William Ferris of the Center for the Study of the American South to present “Memory and Sense of Place in Southern Music” and featured blues vocalist Shemekia Copeland in concert. Shelby also hosted Tom Hanchett of the Levine Museum of the New South for a lecture on “The Mills and the Music,” displayed an exhibit on major music writer Don Gibson, and presented Earl Scruggs and family.

Ultimately, close to 4,000 students in Mars Hill and Shelby paid a visit to the exhibition and participated in MoMS programs. Emily Epley, New Harmonies project director and executive director of Destination Cleveland County, says, “The opportunity to share this exhibit with school kids was of great value in many ways. The existing relationship we have with school leadership, combined with the positive experiences for 2010 school kids and their teachers, helps set a standard that they can look to us in the future for local opportunities to enrich their students learning experiences without having to leave the county.” As the statewide scholar of New Harmonies, Beverly Patterson puts it, “An experience with music can open new worlds” — new worlds in one’s own neighborhood.

The host sites received a total of approximately $16,000 in...
mini-grant funding. This funding supported scholars’ stipends, printing, performer/presenters, travel, publicity, and supplies. The host sites matched the Council’s financial support with over $130,000 in cash and in-kind cost share. An anonymous donation of $5,000 contributed to the transportation of the exhibit across the state.

Established Council programs were also connected to the New Harmonies exhibition tour in a seamless and successful expansion of humanities-based resources. The Humanities Council’s Teachers Institute, with support from the Mount Airy Museum of Regional History and Mars Hill College staff, presented two MoMS-related weekend seminars for public school teachers.

Road Scholar regulars Willie Nelms (“America’s Music Down to Its Roots”), Billy Stephens (“From Pulpit to Pop Star”), Betty Smith (Jane Hicks Gentry: A Singer Among Singers”), and Kenny Dalsheimer (“Shine On: Richard Trice and the Bull City Blues”) were featured at sites. New scholars Benjamin Filene (“Oh Brother, What Next?: Understanding the Folk Fad”) and Larry Thomas (“North Carolina Jazz Connection”) presented at host sites as well. Several of these lectures took place as prelude to and outreach for the exhibition programming.

The exhibition tour and associated programming were represented in the print and broadcast media in ways that served both the sites and the public humanities well. The Smithsonian Institution poster and flyers provided the initial print materials for marketing. These were sent statewide to libraries, academic music departments, and Congressional and state legislative leaders. The Humanities Council designed and distributed its own statewide poster that was creatively used by other sites as a template for their promotional material.

Monthly Our State magazine, as the exhibition’s statewide media sponsor, featured New Harmonies ads, calendar listings, and roots music-related articles to spread the word about the state’s traditional music heritage. Southern Cultures journal posted MoMS announcements in its pages and released a roots music special issue and CD. Carolina Country, LEARN NC, the North Carolina Department of Travel and Tourism, the North Carolina Arts Council, and North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources all promoted MoMS in print and online. The websites of the Humanities Council and host sites were continuously updated to present the latest schedule of events.

Regional arts councils, libraries, businesses, community associations, schools, colleges, travel and visitor bureaus, historical societies, historic sites, chambers of commerce, and museums joined together with the host sites to achieve multiple programming goals. Political, institutional, and community leaders played a part in the openings and in program support. Congressional representatives, state legislators, mayors, city and county council
members, artists, and historians attended site openings, as did Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources Linda Carlisle, Representatives Virginia Foxx and G.K. Butterfield. Senator Richard Burr was at both the opening of the exhibition in Mount Airy in March and the closing ceremony in Shelby in late December.

As an outcome of *New Harmonies*, host sites now have an enhanced capacity to support programs in the public humanities. In Goldsboro a large grant has been awarded for a collaboration between the Wayne County Arts Council and the Wayne County Public Library to present a program examining the culture and peoples of Afghanistan through the photographs of airmen stationed there and other humanities-based presentations. The Warren County Memorial Library received an outstanding program award from North Carolina Public Library Directors Association for *New Harmonies* programming. Two exciting outcomes that benefit the Humanities Council include the addition of Elizabeth City State University’s Douglas Jackson as a new Road Scholar and Laura Boosingher of the Madison County Arts Council serving as scholar on a recently funded large grant in Burnsville examining the life of African American traditional mountain musician Lesley Riddle, who taught guitar and gospel to the Carter family and Mike Seeger.

*New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music* 2010, a collaboration between rural communities statewide, the North Carolina Humanities Council, and the Smithsonian Institution, has indeed been a success to celebrate — a success in increasing awareness of the public humanities on the Main Streets of North Carolina; a success in underscoring the value and diversity of our state’s musical traditions; a success in partnership-building; a success in integrating meaningful regional programming around a theme common to all — North Carolina’s heritage and traditions of American roots music.
WHAT IS HOME? Is it a shelter, a tent, a motel room, a campground, a car? Or is it something less tangible? Is it a place, an attitude, a memory? Is home a privilege or a right? When we ask if someone is homeless, what do we mean? Are we asking if they have shelter for tonight or if they know where they will be sheltering a month from now?

When four years ago the volunteers of Hidden Voices began talking with North Carolinians about home and homelessness, we quickly discovered that it is a story of people hidden in plain view. It is the story of refugees and immigrants set adrift by famine and economics. It is the story of families escaping a violent home by whatever means possible. It is the story of veterans overwhelmed by PTSD, of queer teens expelled from their homes, of families moving from house to motel to car as unpaid medical bills mount. It is the story of young mothers raised on the street who are now raising their own children there and the story of foster youth who may have struggled through a dozen placements and are aging out of the system.

Whether we call it housing displacement, housing crisis, or housing transition, homelessness can deprive us of the basic physical and emotional space needed to create and sustain personal dignity. “A person without a home feels like an angel without wings or a sword,” writes a Durham fourth-grader who experienced a challenging housing situation. Another writes, “A person without a home is called homelost.” And yet another: “To be without a home changes the way you see yourself. The rest of the world feels big and round while I am small and can’t move a muscle.”

If you listen to homeless women, men, and children speak, you will be struck dumb by sheer amazement that they have survived the trauma of their lives and are willing to walk forward with hope. A mother made homeless by domestic violence says, “We go through pictures and my daughter will say, ‘That’s when we were on vacation.’ But I know we were at that little motel next to Golden Corral. We were homeless but I hid it.” A teenager who was horribly neglected while in foster care tells us, “I was left in a motel for about six months without going to any school. The police investigated and got me an in-home counselor. I didn’t even have whole pieces of self-care — putting water on a toothbrush, not swallowing toothpaste.

Hidden Voices is a Hillsborough-based nonprofit that brings the experiences of an under-represented population into the public dialogue — the homeless in North Carolina. Their stories — about identity, place, and access, about being displaced and forgotten, then rediscovered — challenge our assumptions about homelessness. Here, Lynden Harris, the founder of Hidden Voices and director of the public humanities project “Home Is Not One Story,” invites us to listen to the reflections of those whose life circumstances have set them on the move.
Didn’t know a lot of things…but I do have an ability and a will to learn.”

These North Carolinians count not because they are different from us but because they are just like us. Only maybe more resilient. We are the richer for hearing their actual, unadorned stories. Without their alternative perspective, our understanding of America is impoverished and incomplete.

Teri works with homelessness in Winston-Salem. One day, as she and a client drove to collect donations, she listened to his story. He had been a Soul Train dancer. Years of instability and addiction had eroded some, but not all, of his skills. Teri asked if he still danced. “No,” he replied. “But if I get a little bit of oil, I can bust a few moves!” He went on to share how being gay, being called by his family all kinds of insults, had affected his life. Teri cranked up the radio. They sang loud and off-tune, laughing at each other while “Why We Sing” rocked the Jeep. For that sweet ride they were neither male nor female, gay nor straight, housed nor homeless.

Teri knows homelessness. She was there more than once, fleeing the abuse of a spouse, a veteran with too much training in the violent arts and too little support in discarding those once he left the military.

Prayer flags allowed both project participants and community members a chance to lift high their wishes for home. Courtesy Hidden Voices.
"Home Is Not One Story" evolved from oral history into a stage presentation; a photography exhibit; an interactive construction of prayer flags and small houses; an audio CD, and a short film. For one of the project components, Hidden Voices partnered with the Town of Chapel Hill and the NC School of Design to create an Animation Window — short films from first-person narratives shown to passersby on the street. The animations projected from a downtown Raleigh store window offered a glimpse into collective experiences of home. (The Animation Window will be on display again at Block 2 in Raleigh during April and May 2011.)

"Home Is Not One Story" connected diverse communities through the transformative power of the individual voice. When we empower underrepresented populations to tell their stories, we engage in dialogue and positive action. This process strengthens community cohesion and creates opportunities for increased communication, cooperation, and respect.

Today Hidden Voices has more than one hundred volunteers and contributing professionals and develops a new project annually. We believe that stories make change possible. Stories open minds and inspire action. Stories create pathways.


Asheville Wordfest, Recipient of the 2010 Award for Excellence in the Public Humanities

THE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE in the Public Humanities honors outstanding, imaginative, and significant work that reflects, affirms, and promotes the mission and vision of the North Carolina Humanities Council. The award celebrates substantial involvement by a project sponsor or individual in inspiring and developing activities in the public humanities that invite active collaboration by a wide range of community partners.

Humanities Council staff and trustees are honored to present the inaugural Award for Excellence in the Public Humanities to “Asheville Wordfest” of Mountain Area Information Network (MAIN). An annual three-day poetry festival that began in 2008, “Asheville Wordfest” celebrates diversity by bringing together poets across cultural, aesthetic, physical, and racial boundaries. Festival events include readings by internationally renowned poets, open microphones for local residents, discussions, workshops, and presentations broadcast live throughout the world by streaming Internet coverage. “Asheville Wordfest,” directed by Laura Hope-Gill, has become one of the most important poetry festivals in the United States. In 2010 over 1,200 people attended festival events in Asheville and over 1,800 throughout fourteen countries tuned in via the Internet.

“Asheville Wordfest” participants have included The Flying Words Project (a deaf poetry group); refugee poets who have been subjected to terror and torture; poets with serious developmental disabilities; and poets of color, different sexual orientations, and different world-views. The sponsor, under the continuing direction of Hope-Gill, is already making plans for additional funders to make multi-year commitments so that the annual poetry festival continues well beyond the initial Humanities Council grants and support.

In Memoriam: Reynolds Price (1933–2011)

THE NORTH CAROLINA HUMANITIES COUNCIL remembers with great fondness and gratitude the late Reynolds Price, James B. Duke Professor of English at Duke University, member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and recipient of the 2002 John Tyler Caldwell Award for the Humanities.

Who thinks deepest loves the liveliest,
Who looks farthest ascertains the heights —
Sages often bend
At last to beauty.

~ Reynolds Price
From “Socrates and Alcibiades”

Photo by Jan Hensley.
Why I Support the Humanities Council

Calvin Hall

Calvin Hall is an assistant professor and faculty fellow in the department of communication at Appalachian State University. He is the author of *African American Journalists: Autobiography as Memoir and Manifesto* and is completing his sixth year of dedicated service as a North Carolina Humanities Council trustee.

TO SAY that I am a proud North Carolina native is something of an understatement. Indeed, most of the state’s fact book-type information — the State Bird, the State Flower, the State Motto, the State Toast, even the dates of the Wright Brothers’ first flight and the first Greensboro sit-in — is likely written into my DNA. Serving the state for six years as a member of the North Carolina Humanities Council has privileged me with the honor of being able to support the organizations and people who tell the many stories that comprise the living anthology that is North Carolina.

The first time I heard about the Humanities Council, I was a doctoral student at UNC Chapel Hill. The professor for whom I served as research assistant mentioned that he was attending a Council meeting. After he told me more about the organization, I knew immediately that the Council was something that I wanted to be part of. After I was selected to be a trustee, I was surprised to learn about the Council’s long history, impressed by the quality of its staff, and even a bit intimidated by the stature of my fellow trustees.

Most of all, I was awed by the broad scope of the Council’s mission — to support public humanities programs that bring the citizens of North Carolina together to explore our history, our identity, and our culture — and by my responsibility as a trustee in helping the Council pursue its mission. It is a formidable job, but the unassuming and unpretentious way the staff accomplishes its mission helps keep trustees focused on the Council’s success.

I am proud to have contributed to the sharing of the many stories that tell the story of North Carolina.
Trustee Nominations

IF YOU — or someone you know — can help advance the work of the Humanities Council, please consider making a nomination for membership on the Council Board. Visit www.nchumanities.org for details on the roles and responsibilities for Council members as well as information about where to send a nomination letter and résumé. To read criteria for nominating trustees, go to www.nchumanities.org.

Nominations are due by April 15, 2011.

Mission Statement

THE NORTH CAROLINA HUMANITIES COUNCIL serves as an advocate for lifelong learning and thoughtful dialogue about all facets of human life. It facilitates the exploration and celebration of the many voices and stories of North Carolina’s cultures and heritage.

The North Carolina Humanities Council is committed to

- an interdisciplinary approach to the humanities
- dialogue
- discovery and understanding of the humanities — culture, identity, and history
- respect for individual community members and community values
- humanities scholarship and scholars to develop humanities perspectives
- cultural diversity and inclusiveness
- informed and active citizenship as an outgrowth of new awareness of self and community.

Support the Council’s work by donating online at www.nchumanities.org.
2010 NORTH CAROLINA HUMANITIES COUNCIL DONORS

We acknowledge with deep appreciation those who contributed to the North Carolina Humanities Council during the 2010 calendar year. Support from foundations, corporate givers, organizations, and individuals is critical in funding the Humanities Council’s programs and projects throughout the state. On behalf of all the North Carolinians served, the Humanities Council thanks its generous donors.

Donate online at www.nchumanities.org

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IN 2003 the North Carolina Poetry Society, under the leadership of then president Bill Blackley, created the Gilbert-Chappell Distinguished Poet Series in honor of poet Marie Gilbert (1924–2007) and former North Carolina Poet Laureate Fred Chappell. Blackley is now the state director of the series, which is co-sponsored by the North Carolina Poetry Society and North Carolina Center for the Book and promotes the love of reading and writing poetry in part by creating mentorship opportunities throughout North Carolina between students of all ages and distinguished poets.

Marie Gilbert, a founding member of the Greensboro Group and The North Carolina Writers’ Network and past president of the North Carolina Poetry Society, received numerous awards for her writing and contributions to the fine arts, including the Sam Ragan Award in 1994 and the Ethel N. Fortner Writer and Community Award in 2003. She published six collections of poetry, and her work appeared in many anthologies and magazines.

Fred Chappell writes of his fellow poet, “Marie Gilbert, that bright and gentle spirit, enticed me into the conspiracy that she and Bill Blackley had already mounted. They were determined to help instill an interest in poetry, and a love for it, in the young people of our state. Marie and Bill had put together this most worthy project before I arrived on the scene. As North Carolina Poet Laureate, I was to add window dressing, to suggest to teachers, parents and others that encouragement in the appreciation and encouragement of poetry is a beneficial undertaking.

Marie was too soon lost to us, but the result of her labor and inspiration has been admirable and will prove ever more valuable as time goes by. I am proud to be, along with Bill, her fellow conspirator.”

Definitive guidelines for participation in the Gilbert-Chappell Distinguished Poet Series can be found online at www.gilbertchappelldistinguishedpoetseries.com.

COME WITH ME
Marie Gilbert

I will feed you stars
that slide in depth of night
mornings soft and fresh
cowbells from a distant farm
crunch of autumn leaves
gentle pups to lick our fingers
shells in soft hue learned
while waiting
in the sun and sand.

Breeze gentles the day to rest.
Doves ease day to life.

Babies cry
coo when we fill them
cuddle them
still their night.

I will feed you these and much more
if you come with me
and I with you.
Whales have run aground off Cape Cod again. What if God created them for us as metaphor?

How like us they are, beached and prostrate, sand shifting under them with every wave from heaven. Bloated and murder to move, they slowly rot in the blurry sunshine, victims of distress we can’t fathom. All we can think to say is beware the giant squid, the seaquake, beware sickness in your leaders. Beware the dark-eyed shark, sonar’s ping and Japan’s traditional hunger.

The rusty bows of ghost ships are singing through the water.

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**JOHN HOPPENTHALER’S** books of poetry are *Lives of Water* (2003) and *Anticipate the Coming Reservoir* (2008), both from Carnegie Mellon University Press. His poetry appears in *Ploughshares, Virginia Quarterly Review, McSweeney’s Internet Tendency, West Branch, Christian Science Monitor, and Southern Review*, as well as in many other journals and anthologies. He is an assistant professor of creative writing at East Carolina University.

“*The Whale Gospel*” was first published in *West Branch*. 

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**THE WHALE GOSPEL**

*John Hoppenthaler*

Whales have run aground off Cape Cod again. What if God created them for us as metaphor?

How like us they are, beached and prostrate, sand shifting under them with every wave from heaven. Bloated and murder to move, they slowly rot in the blurry sunshine, victims of distress we can’t fathom. All we can think to say is beware the giant squid, the seaquake, beware sickness in your leaders. Beware the dark-eyed shark, sonar’s ping and Japan’s traditional hunger.

The rusty bows of ghost ships are singing through the water.
My fingers flutter nervously against the bow, 
heart drumming against my ribcage.
The conductor lifts her fingers, 
smiles, mouths the counts, 
her baton winking and swaying.
I take a breath...
then the music begins.
Bow meets string with a spark, 
a low thrum, 
a honeyed sound 
ringing throughout the auditorium.
Then it changes, transforms into chords, 
melodies, harmonies.
The notes fly from the strings, 
bounce off airwaves, untamed, 
too bittersweet and romantic for our time.
The creators are long dead, their tragedies 
and love stories captured in this tiny violin.
You can hear their passion through the ink.
My fingers surrender to the song, 
My eyes dart across the page.
Everything else clears away, leaving the music and me.
I provoke it, make it protest in staccato breaths. 
I bring it to tears.
Its laughter bubbles with the plinking of pizzicato, 
it serenades with trembling strokes of bravado; 
it takes me away from this stage, 
to the past, to twinkling Christmas trees 
and arresting flares of a bonfire beneath stars.
Lights dim with the final note, 
my bow burning beneath golden flecks of light.

HANNAH SLOAN is a freshman at Arendell Parrott Academy. She plays three sports and the violin. Hannah is part of many extracurricular activities, including Science Olympiad, SADD, FCA, and her school’s Honor Council. Sloan mentors with the Distinguished Poet John Hoppenthaler.
HOOK WOMAN

Catherine Carter

The story wasn’t real, but it scared you anyway: kids groping in the car, then roaring away, bloody hook rattling the handle. If you’d had any chance of getting any, that hook might even have deterred you; as it was, you were just scared to cross the dark parking lot at your safe school, to hike your empty road at night to look at the dangerous moon climbing the thin trees, the long field: you’d be attacked, hacked, hooked. You wouldn’t go that way once evening turned on daylight’s hinge, and shadow cracked your sureties like the line of black made by a door ajar, a cellar door with down and dark behind it.

At forty, almost sure no hook-handed madmen lurked by brook or branch, you took a glass of brandy, rolled on a sweater, strolled down your hill and up the next through the stripy shadows of the gibbous moon, watching Cygnus sprawl up the sky, the stars of autumn caught in dry trees. But in a cold pool of sunlight uncanny and backward, the white glimmer caught the glass in your hand, and there on your shadow’s black arthritic wrist was a swan’s head, a cane’s crook-handle, or (you knew it now) a hook. Now it’s you who prowl the road by night, strike fear into children waiting to make out in the backs of cars. It’s been there all along on your hand where it always belonged, awaiting the dangerous moon to make it shine like bone.

CATHERINE CARTER was born on the eastern shore of Maryland and now lives near Western Carolina University, where she teaches in and coordinates the English education program. Her first full-length collection, The Memory of Gills (LSU, 2006) received the 2007 Roanoke-Chowan Award from the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association. Her next volume of poetry, The Swamp Monster at Home, is forthcoming from LSU Press in the spring of 2012.
THE WIDOWER AFTER THE FUNERAL

James Cox

His hands have no heat, no noticeable feeling, but to hold her brown and blue sweater, bare latticework at the elbows, frayed cuffs, with the smell of garden and outdoor burnings, settles the shaking floor and imparts a little warmth. Sobs have softened the sharp edges of furniture, the square edges of window casings, and the sharp tilted squares of light that travel the evening ceiling, walls dim receding. No stars tonight, only the moon’s scarred visage and the tutelage of silence. To brew a tea to make forgetting possible requires a part of her he can’t let go. The threadbare sweater begins to unravel, the fibers of his hands and arms, too: the sinew in his shoulders comes undone. Holding on, as he sits on the bed’s edge unable to move, bones nearly bare, skin sunken in his hands, the unraveling threads, blue and brown, shine in the moon; they float into the black air and drift.

James Cox grew up in the cities and countryside of Michigan where he learned wilderness survival and a variety of urban skills. He received his Ph.D. in psychology from Cornell. Now retired, he hikes in the mountains learning wildflower names. He has published poetry in a variety of journals including Pinesong, Paradigm, Silkworm, Cider Press, Pale House, and Barnwood. He was a selected participant in the Gilbert-Chappell 2010 Distinguished Poet Series under the supervision of award-winning poet Catherine Carter.
POISON IVY
Becky Gould Gibson

I don’t need to tell you how I woke up so red and swollen
my little brother cried when he saw me, spent two weeks
in bed with you (my first lover), took liquids through a straw;
how toes closed into webs, pustules worsened with Clorox,
the new remedy. Red-orange, yellow, purple-green, scarlet,
you hug the fencepost, flaming, flamboyant, tricked into autumn
I’d like to say I love all God’s creatures, but I’d be lying.
I hate you, St. Augustine of weeds! You remind me of putrid
flesh, anointing everything with your poisoned oil —
not with grace but damnation. One spot on the skin —
blisters and misery. Miserable sin! So easy to fall,
to fall again, once fallen. Had I grown up in Massachusetts,
would the cosmos have seemed more welcoming,
Pelagian more than Calvinist? Here in the Bible belt,
you ramping up and down the countryside with your glossy leaves,
glossolalia, licking flames, tongues of fire, I caught hell
and not only from the preacher. How often you’ve kept me
from touching a tree or my husband. Blazing emblem —
even birds carry you. Seeds of sin — ubiquitous!
Yet I confess I’m drawn to your beauty, the sweetness of sin,
as Augustine puts it. Are you destined to be here?
As usual you got what you wanted. Weed-whackers
gave you a wide berth, left you trailing the fence,
a bride’s bouquet in autumn. A breeze catches you in all your glory.

“Poison Ivy” was first published in The Texas Review, Fall/Winter 2009.

BECKY GOULD GIBSON has published two prize-winning chapbooks of poetry
and three full-length collections, First Life (Emrys Press, 1997), Need-Fire (2005 Poetry
Book Contest, Bright Hill Press, 2007), and Aphrodite’s Daughter (2006 X.J. Kennedy
Prize, Texas Review Press, 2007). Need-Fire
received the 2008 Brockman-Campbell Award
given by the North Carolina Poetry Society
for the best book by a North Carolina poet
in 2007. Her poems have appeared in numerous journals as well as in several anthologies,
most recently, Don’t Leave Hungry: Fifty Years
of Southern Poetry Review (2009). Gibson is
serving her second term as mentor to stu-
dent poets in North Carolina Poetry Society’s
Gilbert-Chappell Distinguished Poet Series.
Her mentee this term is Celisa Steele.
EMILY ON ASH WEDNESDAY

Celisa Steele

She did not go to mass and still she feels a phantom temple print endure as though some shaky priest imposed the ash, and seals the sense by tracing t on her own brow before she pours a glass of wine that’s meant to mark this day, then one more as she cleans a spill on hands and knees — a penitent — and thinks of him in wilderness that teems with loneliness and lack, because she can almost trust a god who struggles alone, no mother, no wife to hold his hand, a god whose very soul is stitched and sewn with want and need. A kind of kindred spirit she thinks, and drinks the last drop of claret.

**Events and Deadlines**

**Large Grants**
For projects beginning after **July 15** and **December 15**
- Draft proposals are due **March 15** and **August 15**
- Final proposals are due **April 15** and **September 15**
*This grant cycle is deferred until the fall.

**Mini-Grants**
Mini-grant applications must arrive at the Humanities Council office by the **first day** of the month and must be made at least **eight weeks** in advance of the program.

**Planning Grants**
There is no deadline for a planning grant.

**Road Scholars**
Road Scholars applications must be submitted at least **eight weeks** in advance of the requested program.

**Let’s Talk About It**
Let’s Talk About It applications must be submitted at least **eight weeks** in advance of the requested program.

**Trustee Meetings**
- **June 3, 2011**
- **September 10, 2011**
- **November 11, 2011**

**Nominations for New Trustees**
New trustee nominations must arrive at the Humanities Council office by **April 15, 2011**.

**Linda Flowers Literary Award**
Entries must be postmarked by **August 15, 2011**.

**Teachers Institute Application Deadlines**
- **NC’s Furniture Industry**, High Point Museum, High Point, **February 11, 2011**
- **NC Coastal Culture**, Core Sound Waterfowl Museum, Harkers Island, **April 15, 2011**
- **NC in the American Revolution**, North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh, **June 30, 2011**

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- **$1,000** funds a Let’s Talk About It series of five programs at one library
- **$3,000** creates a one-year named scholarship for a Teachers Institute participant

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