

'Flashback' Issue Celebrates 10-Year Anniversary

By Christine Bates

The *North Carolina Literary Review*, known by its readers as *NCLR*, celebrates its tenth anniversary this year with a "flashback" issue that includes at least one idea from each of the ten previous issues. "It is a reflection of the last ten years," said editor Margaret Bauer (English).

Among the stories included in the anniversary issue is an interview conducted by Peter Makuck with *NCLR*'s founding editor, Alex Albright. Both Makuck and Albright are ECU faculty members in the Department of English. In that interview entitled "'Out of all places, East Carolina': Talking with *NCLR*'s Founding Editor," Albright spoke about the journal's beginnings. It started, he said, from a concept developed by College of Arts and Sciences Dean Keats Sparrow, who wanted a magazine strictly focused on North Carolina literature.

According to Sparrow, "*NCLR* is a great cultural asset for North Carolina and an academic jewel for ECU."

"Under Alex's highly capable leadership, from its premier issue *NCLR* has been a stunning success and is often cited as the finest state literary review in the nation," he said. "Its extraordinary vitality and quality continue unabated under the editorship of Alex's successor, Margaret Bauer."

The journal's reputation for excellence began soon after it began. In 1994, the *NCLR* won the Council of Editors of Learned Journals' Best New Journal award and received recognition again from the same organization in 1999 with Best Journal Design. When asked what makes the journal so special, Bauer replied, "It's just so different. It's not really an academic journal or a magazine; it is something in between."

Each issue of *NCLR* has a theme, such as the upcoming 2003 issue focusing on the centennial of flight. A recent issue was centered on science fiction, another on reflections of the past. "There is no magic to how the themes are selected," said Bauer. "They are just ideas that come to me."

Bauer is impressed with how the *NCLR* began and how it has changed throughout the years. She has continued to publish nonfiction, fiction, photographs, art, poems, articles and essays about North Carolina's history and culture. But Bauer has made a few changes. She will accept only material related to North Carolina. The format is also different from its original layout; she likes every issue to have specific sections such as poetry and creative writing. And she now accepts unsolicited material; previously, all published material had been solicited by the editor.

Bauer hopes to make even more changes to *NCLR* in the future. She would like to see the journal sponsor readings at ECU by North Carolina writers. She would like to broaden its readership, and increase the number of North Carolinians who hold subscriptions. "*NCLR* is for everyone, not just those in academia," she said. "North Carolina is full of wonderful



Margaret Bauer has been the editor of the *North Carolina Literary Review* since 1998. The journal is celebrating 10 years with a newly-released anniversary issue. (Photo by Marc Kawanishi)

writers and readers."

And she hopes to someday train a permanent staff.

For now, Bauer works on the journal year-round with a team of graduate assistants and ECU faculty and staff. Though there are and have been many to help *NCLR* throughout the last ten years, Bauer is especially grateful to volunteers in ECU's Department of English, the Office of the Provost, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, and the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association who publish the journal annually.

Though the job of editing *NCLR* is time-consuming and leaves little time for Bauer to pursue her own writing, she could not imagine giving it up. "It's just too important," she said. Efforts of the *NCLR* team help the journal reach over 1,000 readers with each issue. When an issue is published, approximately 2/3 of the copies are sold immediately to subscribers, contributors, and bookstores. The remaining copies are purchased by special request throughout the year.

Copies are available by subscription or individually by request to the English Department by e-mailing the editor at bauerm@mail.ecu.edu, or by visiting the website at www.ecu.edu/nclr. The *NCLR* is also available at ECU's Dowdy Student Stores.

Current *NCLR* staff, in addition to Bauer, include Lorraine Hale Robinson, senior associate editor; J. Jeffrey Franklin, poetry editor; Melissa Edmundson and Celeste Pottier, senior assistant editors; Randall Martoccia, assistant editor; Andrew Bates, design assistant; Sally Lawrence, web page designer; Cheryl Dudasik-Wiggs, indexer; and Dennis Turner, submissions assistant. Graphic

designers are Mary Thiesen, Stephanie Whitlock, Robert Puckett, Brandie Knox Kirkman, Ryan Webb, and Lisa Henderson. Interns for 2001 - 2002 are Sherrell Branch, Carolyn K. Dunn, Michelle Friedlander, and Donna Beacham.

The current anniversary issue includes such stories as "An October Story from the Youth of Thomas Wolfe" by Mabel Wolfe Wheaton with LeGette Blyte; and "John Lawson and the Warring Nations: A Meditation on Images of Terror," by Marjorie Hudson; and "Women Writers of Black Mountain College," by Lois Carol Wheatley.

Charles D. Thompson Jr. contributed "Who is my Neighbor?: Parables of Survival from the Floyd Flood of 1999," with photography by Rob Amberg.

Creative writing includes a fantasy story by Fred Chappell, "Gift of Roses, with an afterword by Patrick Bizzaro (English); a poem by Susan Meyers entitled "Morning Prayer," and "Education South," a story by Paul Green.

A "Food Finds" section includes "Short and Sweet: Pat's Soda Shop, Vanceboro" by Lorraine Hale Robinson (English); and "Barbecue Culture Shock: Stamey's Barbecue, Greensboro," by Gwen Ashley Walters with photography by Kenneth Bennett.

Book reviews include a review of two North Carolina post-bellum novels by Jerry Leath Mills (English), "Civil War and Collateral Damage"; a review of four recent North Carolina mysteries by Donna Summerlin entitled, "Murder and Mayhem, Gothic and Grotesque"; and "Radio Writers," a review of Two NPR Collections," by James O. Chatham. The North Carolina Writers section includes "The Snow L. and B.W.C. Roberts Collection of North Carolina Fiction," by Nancy Shires (Joyner Library); "Dictionary of North Carolina Writers," by Lorraine Hale Robinson; and "'A good story well told': Robert Inman's Storytelling Journey," by Anna Dunlap Higgins.

In addition to her work as *NCLR* editor, Bauer is the author of *The Fiction of Ellen Gilchrist*, and her articles have appeared in *Southern Literary Journal*, the *College Language Association Journal*, *Studies in Short Fiction*, and the *South Central Review*, and in the essay collections *Ellen Glasgow: New Perspectives*, *Critical Essays on Kate Chopin*, and *Critical Essays on Alice Walker*.

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In celebration of *North Carolina Literary Review*'s tenth anniversary, Margaret Bauer hosted a champagne and dessert reception at her home Oct. 6. Attending were a number of people involved in the journal including art directors, graduate assistants, graphic designers, writers, photographers, artists, journal supporters and ECU faculty and staff. Bauer toasted everyone who had taken part in *NCLR* over the past 10 years, with special thanks extended to founding editor Alex Albright and College of Arts and Sciences Dean Keats Sparrow. Pictured at the event are (left to right) Melissa Edmundson, senior assistant editor; Celeste Pottier, senior assistant editor; Lorraine Robinson, senior associate editor; and Bauer. (Photo by Christine Bates)