

In Memory of Liz Bell

*Thou wert the morning star among the living,
Ere thy fair light had fled—
Now, having died, thou art as Hesperus, giving
New splendor to the dead.*

I had to struggle with piercing sadness mixed with equally strong but comforting, happy memories when I learned that our beloved comrade Liz Bell died, too young, at age 56, on April 14th, 2002. A flood of lines from countless elegies came to mind, but the epigraph to Shelley's passionate tribute remained most powerful. Liz was certainly a splendid, fair light among us.

Now she is gone, but we all remember fondly what a lasting influence she has had on our lives and careers. Liz was a wonderfully generous, vivacious, kind friend and colleague who, even though we may have seen each other only once a year at a PCAS/ACAS conference, always extended herself warmly to me and others. Her abundant spirit and good will filled the room wherever she was, and I bet many of us can remember what a treat it was to have her sit in any of our sessions. She always energized our conversations after a round of papers, always adding wonderful tidbits of relevant information, always challenging our intellects with her insights and curiosity.

Liz touched the lives of many. As I wrote and called those closest to her, I was not surprised to encounter at first a silence prompted by heavy grief, the kind of woe that leaves us speechless. But suddenly, the words of praise,



“
**In a way, something of the best
of us has been taken away.**
—John Zubizarreta
on the death of Elizabeth S. Bell
”

honor, gratitude, respect, joy, and—most of all—love would come and stir the same emotions in me. Talk to anyone who knew Liz and I can assure you the response would be the same. She has left an awesome legacy.

Liz was Professor of English at the University of South Carolina, Aiken, and former chair of the department from 1986-1990. Born in Kentucky, she graduated with a B.A. degree from Kentucky Southern University, completed

Continued on page 5

32nd Annual PCAS/ACAS Promises



The program for the 32nd annual meeting of the Popular Culture Association in the South and the American Culture Association in the South promises to be intellectually challenging, socially engaging, and filled with POP as in popular culture, as in bursting with vitality.

We start early, at 8:15 a.m. on Thursday, October 3rd, with sex (what else?) and the media, as well as sessions on film and television and conclude by 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 5th with sessions that will “Unbuckle the Bible Belt” and will examine us, the academics who study and perform popular culture.

Between the beginning and the end, the program exhibits stimulating sessions. One of the more unusual is “Writing and All That Jazz,” which demonstrates relationships between writing and jazz music and employs the talents of jazz guitarist, Royce Campbell. Tom Hanchett, curator of the Levine Museum of the New South and Pamela Grundy will explain some of the exhibits at the museum in Char-

Continued on page 5

Book Reviews

Review of *Fighting the Forces: What's at Stake in Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Edited by Rhonda V. Wilcox and David Lavery. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002.

As Buffy fights “the forces of darkness,” so also, the editors of this volume of critical essays assert, quality television and its creators combat “a press of forces —[which include] both social and artistic expectations, conventions of the business and the art” (xvii). David Lavery and Rhonda Wilcox contend that “good television. . . fights these forces — even while it partakes of them as part of its nature” (xvii). As this study shows, the program has layers of complex, sometime paradoxical, and often self-reflexive meaning.

After the introduction briefly demonstrates the program's merits as “quality television,” the collection is then divided into three parts, covering social, cultural and artistic forces at work in the series. The first section contains the most compelling essays, with cogent academic explorations such as Rhonda Wilcox's meditation on the patriarchy-breaking “patterns of mortality” evidenced throughout the series, and Lynne Edwards' provocative examination of a prevailing black stereotype seen in the character of another slayer. There are also delightful surprises, such as Catherine Siemanns' piece on Buffy as the *fin de siècle* counterpart to that quintessential California girl, Gidget.

Noteworthy in Part II, which explores occult/mythic connections, is Diane DeKelb-Rittenhouse's look at the literary convention of the vampire Lothario as exemplified in two of the show's characters; in contrast, Sarah E. Skwire's analysis shows how the program turns convention—in this case, fairy tale narrative—on its head.

In the third section, covering the extent and variety of fan influence on the series, Justine Larbalestier's essay on the program's most self-reflexive,

and most fan-conscious, episodes is particularly enlightening. The study ends with a useful episode list for the five seasons of the program covered in the essays. Like the compendiums of myth and lore which Buffy's Watcher calls upon to guide her, this collection functions as an excellent, scholarly watcher's guide.

Michele Boyette
University of North Florida

Review of *The Fantastic Vampire: Studies in the Children of the Night: Selected Essays from the Eighteenth International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts*. Edited by James Craig Holte. Contributions to the Study of Science Fiction and Fantasy 91. Westport: Greenwood, 2002.

This casebook of essays commemorates the centenary publication of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). Sixteen presenters at the 1997 International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts (<http://www.iafa.org>) have papers published, largely in the form they took at the conference. The average length of the essays—not including notes and citation lists—is seven pages, so most of them don't go into depth. In fact, some articles just summarize their primary and secondary sources, and should not have seen print. Unevenness of quality haunts all casebooks, though, and I'm willing to judge a collection by its best material. Fortunately, several articles make this one worth reading for anyone interested in the subject.

First, the bad news about this book. Its faulty copyediting and documentation errors are difficult to take. So many errors occur, on almost every page, they are too numerous to list. Misspellings, deleted words (including in quotes), punctuation errors, subject/verb disagreement, unclearly attributed or unattributed quotes, and instances of two citations run together as one, occur so often that I felt someone was asleep at the wheel in the editorial process. These examples will do: “tenant” is used for “tenet” (page 43), “Otranto” is misspelled once and “Helsing” twice on one

page (39), “interesting” appears instead of “interest in” (158), two different sources by Farson and Feimer are run together as one (36), the block quote of Beckwith ends with a superfluous quotation mark (127). My favorite error comes from an endnote in an article on vampire music: “For example, ‘Dancing’ has its dancers dancing on hot tiles, on tender [tenter] hooks, and in church isles [aisles]” (65-66). Excepting attributions the errors can be corrected mentally, so the reader must do the job the editorial process did not.

As for the book's virtues, its range of subjects is admirably wide. Stoker's novel retains its position as the canonical vampire tale; eight editions of the oft-reprinted novel get cited, including critical editions edited by Auerbach and Skal (1977, a Norton edition), Wilson (1983, an Oxford edition), and Wolf (1993, an annotated edition). Two of Stoker's other novels—*The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903) and *The Lair of the White Worm* (1911)—get attention. Three articles consider the Saint-Germain series by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, and two others examine H. Rider Haggard's *She* (1887) and Anne Rice's bestsellers. Vampire films treated include *Killing Zoe* (1994), *Vampire in Brooklyn* (1995), and those in which Christopher Lee played Dracula. Media-related articles document vampire music (a variant of Goth music), and

Continued on page 3

The PCAS/ACAS NEWSLETTER

This publication is the newsletter for the Popular Culture Association and the American Culture Association in the South organizations. It is published through The Writing Program, James Madison University, MSC 2103, Harrisonburg, VA 22807. Phone: 540-568-6004 Fax: 540-568-2742 Editors: Shelley Aley and Beth Brunk-Chavez e-mail: aleysb@jmu.edu

Continued from page 2

novelizations based on the Dungeons and Dragons role-playing game. Comparative articles pair Stoker with Wilde's *Salome*, and Stoker with Edvard Munch's paintings.

The International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts encourages its presenters to pursue their fascinations; in fact, a fannish admiration for their subject controls several writers' articles. At one point Leslie Tannenbaum castigates reviewers who panned *Vampire in Brooklyn*, then praises the film for showing whites vampirized for making prejudicial or patronizing remarks to Eddie Murphy. The racism in this film is no less puerile than it was in *Son of Dracula* (1943), with its subservient African-Americans in minor roles. In addition, Margaret Carter's article on the novels about Strahd—a vampire “non-player character” created for the Dungeons and Dragons game—doesn't note the novelization as a bastard child of popular culture. Other articles show thinness of approach. Scott Vander Ploeg argues Stoker's *Dracula* is not a Gothic novel (but rather a suspense novel), an analysis that needs severely qualifying. Katie Harse has little to say about *The Jewel of Seven Stars* other than she likes the book and knows its backgrounds. This casebook could have been improved by cutting the weaker pieces and having the stronger writers expand on their ideas. Since the book took five years to publish, there was time to do so.

Three articles in the book are a pleasure to read, and should influence the criticism in their areas. Raymond T. McNally's “Bram Stoker and Irish Gothic” offers a position piece on *Dracula*, calling Transylvania a metaphor for Ireland from a British viewpoint, and then linking Swift's modestly proposed cannibalism to vampiric orality. William Pencak's “‘Appalling in Its Gloomy Fascination’: Stoker's *Dracula* and Wilde's *Salome*” offers a sophisticated reading of *Salome* as a vampire-like creature, contextualizing the two texts as works of fantasy. Heidi L.

Nordberg's “Blood Spirit/Blood Bodies: The Viral in the Vampire Chronicles of Anne Rice and Chelsea Quinn Yarbro” convinced me Yarbro is a more significant vampire novelist than Rice, although Rice is far better known.

Everyone interested in vampires has a favorite novel or film in which they appear. I wish to mention mine. George R. R. Martin's novel *Fevre Dream* (1982) puts vampires aboard steamboats in the nineteenth-century American South; the loss of a means of transportation (and way of life) becomes an elegy for the dying vampire species. In film, Werner Herzog's *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (1979) has the best visualization of Gothic sublimity I've been privileged to see. Here and elsewhere, it's clear why vampires refuse to die. In their male form, at least, they will always be “The world's last gentlemen” (Peter Cooley, “The Heaven of the Vampires,” *New Yorker* 1 Nov. 1982).

Michael J. Emery
Cottey College

Review of *Southern Women Playwrights New Essays in Literary History and Criticism*. Edited by Robert L. McDonald and Linda Rohrer Paige. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2002.

Are there any Southern women playwrights beyond Lillian Hellman, Beth Henley, Marsha Norman, and Carson McCullers? This first-rate collection of essays answers with a resounding YES. Though there are many Southern women writing plays, their work has received little critical attention, a lack that this collection begins to address with intelligent and useful critical and historical work that calls “attention to distinctive voices, features, and themes in drama by Southern women.”

The editors provide an overview of the collection in their introduction and then bookend the collection with essays of their own. Robert L. McDonald opens with an examination of possible reasons for this lack of scholarship. McDonald posits that the historical American ambivalence towards

drama—applauding it as entertainment and fearing “its capacity to disseminate radical vision”—and the traditional prejudice towards women in the public role of playwrights contribute heavily to the dearth of criticism.

Linda Rohrer Paige concludes by exploring the vitality of the theater community in Atlanta through a focus on four women playwrights—Shirlene Holmes, Sandra Deer, Barbara Lebow, and Pearl Cleage—who typify the outstanding quality produced on the stages of Atlanta—especially the Alliance, the Academy, and Actors Express—and beyond.

Between these two fine essays, the editors have collected fourteen substantial and insightful essays. Three essays reveal the usefulness of archival research: John Lowe employs his extensive knowledge of Zora Neale Hurston's manuscripts to show her strong interest in developing an authentic Negro theater; Theresa R. Mooney uses Hellman's manuscripts to demonstrate how “Southern” her work is; and Judith Giblin James studies Lillian Smith's papers to demonstrate the politics of Broadway in the reception of Smith's and Carson McCullers' dramas.

Some of the essays such as those by Betty E. McKinnie and Carlos Dews, Donna Lisker, Sally Burke, Jane L. Gupton, Carolyn Roark, Elizabeth Brown-Guillory, and Mary Resing consider the politics of gender, race, and ethnicity in the dramas of McCullers, Alice Childress, Marsha Norma, Beth Henley, Rebecca Gilman, Amparo

Continued on page 4

Call for Reviews

If you are interested in contributing a review to the spring 2003 *PCAS/ACAS Newsletter*, please contact Shelley Aley at aleysb@jmu.edu. Reviews should be between 250 and 500 words long.

Continued from page 3

Garcia, Suzan-Lori Parks, and Regina Porter. Each of these essays is well-written and add significantly to our understanding and appreciation of these Southern women playwrights.

The late Elizabeth S. Bell's essay on the role the Actor's Theatre of Louisville (ATL) has played in developing the work of Southern women playwrights establishes not only an excellent survey of the history of that significant relationship but it also serves as an introduction to one of the collection's stronger essays, J. Ellen Gainor's "Pseudonymy and Identity Politics: Exploring 'Jane Martin.'" Gainor uses the pseudonymous "Jane Martin," one of ATL's more prolific playwrights, to brilliantly question some feminist theories of identity. Another outstanding essay that also deals with the work of still another ATL playwright is Claudia Barnett's Brechtian analysis of Naomi Wallace's plays, especially her *One Flea Spare*. Her description of the drama inherent in Wallace's work almost makes it live on the page. Alan Shepherd's and Mary Lamb's "The Memory Palace in Paul Vogel's Plays" is not only the first extensive work on Vogel's important theater work, it also presents a reading of Vogel's drama that future critics must address.

Robert L. McDonald and Linda Rohrer Paige, the editors of this collection and long-standing members and officers of PCAS/ACAS, deserve a standing ovation for their superior work.

Larry Vonalt
University of Missouri--Rolla

ATTENTION

Looking for newspaper or magazine articles about itinerant movie projectionists in the 20s, 30s, and 40s in rural areas. Please send an email to Larry Vonalt at lvonalt@umr.edu.

Playing Host: Charlotte presents history, culture, events

During your visit to Charlotte for our annual meeting, allow yourself time to enjoy a visit with our host city.

While we are conferencing, the Charlotte Center City Partners will be sponsoring a five-week celebration of art and soul that runs from Sept. 2 to Oct. 6. According to CCCP's web site, the festival will incorporate more than 200 performances and events in over 40 venues throughout the Charlotte region, celebrating the visual, performing, musical, and culinary arts. Called "**Charlotte Shout**," the festival will be a "celebration of the senses - touch, sight, smell, hearing and taste - and will incorporate the visual, performing, musical and culinary arts in a way that has never been done before in the city."

A variety of historical and cultural exhibits are also scheduled. The **Levine Museum of the New South** is Charlotte's only regional history museum focusing on the New South period. This interactive regional history museum currently features changing and traveling exhibits that offer a view of Charlotte's past. It is the only museum in the country concentrating exclusively on New South history. Located at 324 North College Street, the Levine Museum offers several exhibits scheduled through Oct. 6.

Discovery Place is one of the nation's top hands-on science museums. It houses a Planetarium and an Omnimax Theatre. Located at 301 North Tryon Street, it will feature **Jane Goodall's Wild Chimpanzees**, world premiere of an IMAX experience that takes viewers into the world of chimpanzees with world-renowned primatologist Jane Goodall.

The **Mint Museum of Art** initially served the region as the first branch of the United States Mint, coining \$5 million in gold from 1836 to the outbreak of the Civil War. Today, the museum is one

of the Southeast's leading museums of art. It is located at 2730 Randolph Road.

The **African-American Cultural Center**, formerly a Neo Classical Revival Church, is a multi-disciplinary arts organization presenting, preserving and promoting African-American art, history and culture through exhibitions, performances, workshops and hands-on activities. Located at 401 North Myers Street, it will be featuring the **Eros Negras Exhibit** through Nov. 30.

The **Charlotte Museum of History and the Hezekiah Alexander Homesite** is the location of the oldest existing home in Mecklenburg County. The Revolutionary War-era home of Hezekiah Alexander is located at 3500 Shamrock Drive.

The historic **Rosedale Plantation**, once a 911-acre plantation, offers visitors tours of the 1815 manor house and eight acres of beautiful grounds and gardens. A National Register Landmark, **Rosedale Plantation** is located on Tryon Street, three miles north of uptown Charlotte.

A visit to Charlotte should include districts of interest, as well as walking tours. In **Uptown** Charlotte view rare Frescoes created by Ben Long, visit the arts and entertainment district, and see the **Uptown** banking centers. This is the location of **Charlotte's 10K VolksWalk Trail**—sanctioned by the American Volkssport Association. This map-guided, non-competitive, year-round walk takes you through **Uptown** as well as some of the historic neighborhoods of Charlotte. Maps are available at the start and finish point, INFO!Charlotte, 330 S. Tryon Street. Call (704) 331-2700 for information.

On Saturday, Oct. 5, the **Race for the Cure** will take place in **Uptown** Charlotte. For more information call 704-358-0717.

The historic **Fourth Ward** is Charlotte's only surviving pre-streetcar neighborhood. Built in the late 1800s, this area is a revitalized historic Victorian neighborhood. According to Charlotte's web site, "Charlotte is in the midst of a

Continued on page 6

Continued “Liz” from page 1

her M.A. from Central Michigan University, and received her Ph.D. from the University of Louisville. Her tenure at USCA extended over twenty-three years, and during that time, she was an active scholar and enviable teacher, making a lasting impact on many colleagues and students. Following news of Liz’s death, one student, for example, said in an interview for the Aiken press, “I remember her compassion toward her students. . . . She always talked with sincerity and was always smiling. She loved her job and she wanted to help others. She was so compassionate.” After I, myself, learned the sad news, I corresponded with another student who remembered Liz with great fondness, saying that she was one of the most well-known and highly respected professors on campus. The university chancellor publicly declared that Liz was “a great friend and a valued colleague, and it is difficult to think of this campus without her smile, her insights and her dedication to be the very best that we could be.”

What stands out to me about the chancellor’s commemoration is the focus on Liz’s smile. That smile! PCAS/ACAS is a photogenic bunch, and we like to take photos at conferences to record not so much our scholarly achievements at the meeting but our affection for each other and the fun we

share in gathering every year. I bet several of us have numerous photos, and likely Liz is in at least a couple. I know we have photos in the official archives, and wherever Liz appears, there’s that smile! Even while presenting in a session and reading a paper on Vietnam war fiction or the Manhattan Project or early women aviators! How do you do that? Liz could, and she always did.

Liz shared her cheer and scholarly reputation with PCAS/ACAS for many years, serving the organization in the Executive Committee and as a former president and program chair. Most recently, she was the journal editor of *Studies in American Culture*, helping to bolster the scholarly integrity and professionalism of our group and the field of culture studies. She, herself, brought great credentials to the job of making scholarship on popular and American culture a mainstream academic endeavor. Her books include a pioneering volume on *Sisters of the Wind: Voices of Early Women Aviators*, *Kay Boyle: A Study of the Short Fiction*, and *Words That Must Somehow Be Said: Selected Essays of Kay Boyle*. She wrote numerous critical essays on Kay Boyle, John Kennedy O’Toole, Vietnam war stories, and other eclectic topics such as the popular television figure of the Incredible Hulk. Her work in cultural studies has also appeared in

prestigious publications such as the *Journal of American Culture* and *South Atlantic Review*.

My heart aches when I remember that the last time I saw Liz was in Jacksonville, Florida, at last year’s PCAS/ACAS conference and that my dreams of many more wonderful years of PCAS/ACAS connections, highlighted by joyous and raucous reunions with dear friends, will now always have a poignant, bittersweet edge.

In a way, something of the best of all of us has been taken from us. In Jacksonville, despite her own fight with cancer and her challenges of caring devotedly for her ailing husband, Ron, Liz still beamed when she spoke about her son and daughter, her sister, her friends, her scholarship, her teaching—all the relationships and passions that made her such a morning star among the living.

Liz is gone, but one of the few things that help reaffirm all of us as teachers in the same profession Liz loved so deeply is the hope that we will be remembered if only by one fond colleague or student. We miss her terribly, but I know Liz’s memory will live safely, vividly as a fair light, in our care and love.

**John Zubizarreta,
PCAS/ACAS President**

Continued “Pop” from page 1

lotte. Another panel that verges on the unusual is “Cultures of Animals, Insects, and Fish.”

Poets and fiction writers will read from their works. Shakespeare enthusiasts will enjoy the panels “Shakespeare at the Movies” and “Adaptations and Permutations of *Hamlet*.” Literary sleuths will find plenty of crime and detection sessions to keep their minds cogitating. Students of music culture will enjoy panels on Southern gospel music, hip

hop, country music, Tori Amos, Jimmy Buffet, and R.E.M.

For those interested in Southern literature and culture there are two panels on photographing the South, panels that explore Southern icons and souvenirs, and a host of panels that examine Southern authors, including individual panels on Kate Chopin, Ernest Gaines, Lalita Tademy, Lee Smith, and Harry Crews.

We have panels on food, fashion, film, and some of the other “F” words.

We have panels on art, advertising, audiences, alcohol and some of the other “A” words. There are sessions on gender, culture in the UK, history, mothers, pedagogy and, of course, popular cultures and American cultures. We hope you enjoy!

**Larry Vonalt
2002 Program Co-Chair**

Check out the PCAS/ACAS Web Site
<http://www.middleenglish.org/>
PCASACAS/

PCAS/ACAS OFFICERS

Office	Name	E-mail Address
Executive Secretary	Dianne Calhoun-French	Diane.Calhoun-French@kctcs.net
President	John Zubizarreta	jzubizarreta@colacoll.edu
Vice-President	Robert L. McDonald	MCDONALDRL@mail.vmi.edu
Past President	Elizabeth Cummins	Cummins@umr.edu
AC Member-at-Large	Elsa Nystrom	enystrom@mindspring.com
PC Member-at-Large	Mary Alice Money	maryalicem@mindspring.com
PC Member-at-Large	Robert Holtzclaw	rholzcl@mtsu.edu
Tech Member-at-Large	David Lavery	dlavery@frank.mtsu.edu
Grad Member-at-Large	Hugh Davis	hughdavis@hotmail.com

Publications Editors

Studies in Popular Culture

Editors	Michael Dunne	mdunne@frank.mtsu.edu
	Sara Lewis Dunne	sdunne@frank.mtsu.edu

Studies in American Culture

Editor	Linda Rohrer Paige
--------	--------------------

PCAS Newsletter

Editors	Shelley Aley	aleysb@jmu.edu
	Beth Brunk-Chavez	blbrunk@utep.edu

Continued from page 4

historic renaissance. The textile factories, merchant shops and churches of the early twentieth century are now the offices, suites, and studios of the early twenty-first century.” Visitors can see the renovation and restoration of this district. Take a walking tour of **Charlotte Center City** and the historic **Fourth Ward** areas. Pick up walking maps for these tours at INFO! Charlotte, 330 S. Tryon Street.

Art and Soul of South End is scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 5, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. The festival, located on Upper Camden Road, the 1500 block of Camden between South Tryon & Park Ave., is free. This one-day festival promotes **South End’s** emerging arts district combined with the 4th Annual Oktoberfest, a beer-tasting event featuring home BrewMasters. Phone (704) 334-1442 for more information.

Conferencing is nice, but don’t forget to see the sights. Consult <http://www.charlottecvb.org/> for more information about our host city, Charlotte, NC.

Shelley Aley

Newsletter Co-Editor

Check out the PCAS/ACAS Web Site

<http://www.middleenglish.org/PCASACAS/>

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT # 4
HARRISONBURG
VA22807

The Writing Program
James Madison University
MSC 2103
Harrisonburg, VA 22807