

The View from Next Door

NEWSLETTER

September / October 2013

by Katie Geddes

When the floor opened for questions at the Informal Conversation with Professor Tom Lux, I asked our guest to elaborate on his public poetry workshops. Lux assuredly replied, "The best way to keep a gift is to give it back." He articulated that teaching and serving as Director of Poetry at Tech is an honor, and it was inherent to involve the community in his endeavors. When I asked him to describe how he advertised his community workshops he explained that he attended events throughout the Atlanta area (poetry readings, book fairs, etc.) and knew several local poets personally. Some of these poets are now regulars at his free weekend workshops.



Lux's outlook greatly impressed me. Over the past few years I have been involved in a number of service projects and I've noticed that community participation is unfailingly the hardest component of any endeavor. I'm always

encouraged and inspired to hear about Georgia Tech students applying their unique skills to community needs and fulfilling the Institute motto of "Progress and Service," but how do you meaningfully engage a community? As

able as we are as Tech students to engineer solutions, how can we simply get people to use them? In a more basic sense, how do we get people to come to an event? I bet most of you have been involved in some sort of outreach event that was under-attended. I think Tom Lux is onto something. He knew his audience before creating his program. He attended their events before inviting the community to his own. Most, if not all, Honors

Program students are involved in some sort of service. I encourage you all to step outside of your comfort zone and relate to the audience your service is aimed at—you might be pleasantly surprised with the results.

Trial by Trail

by Dr. Gregory Nobles

This past summer, legendary Honors Program professor Hugh Crawford completed a three-year hike of the Appalachian Trail with his son Bennett, reaching the southern terminus of the AT, Maine's Mt. Katahdin on August 12 — 2185 miles north of Georgia's Springer Mountain. Looking back on the experience, Crawford observed, "To call something life-changing seems a cliché, but that is the trail. You are reduced to elemental life—all those miles you think of in the abstract become real each day, one by one, step by step." Never one to miss the connection between doing and teaching, Dr. Crawford will offer an Honors Program special topic course on "Walking" in the upcoming spring semester.



Come to the

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH KALEIDOSCOPE

October 3 from 11am-12pm
in the Library's Neely Room

Free food provided!

**Want to find out which
Special Topics Courses
will be offered in the
Spring?**

Come to the Honors Program

Course Rollout Luncheon!

Thursday, Oct. 17, 2013

11 AM - 12 PM

Wardlaw Building

NEED FUNDING FOR A PROJECT,
CONFERENCE, OR STUDY ABROAD TRIP?

APPLY FOR A STUDENT CHALLENGE FUND GRANT!

Proposals addressing social justice and/or environmental sustainability are especially welcome. For preferred consideration please submit by Friday, November 1.

The proposal template is posted on the Honors Program website under the Current Students tab.

Student Highlights

Becky Byler

by Sara Hojjatie

Becky Byler, senior BME student, has an array of achievements under her belt. Her research for the past two and a half years sought to develop a novel malaria diagnostic tool for earlier detection than the current gold standard, and Becky was published as first author for her work. Byler was awarded a Research and Design Award by BMES and the James "Rhio" O'Connor Memorial Scholarship. She was also awarded a \$5,000 scholarship for her winning essay on cancer, selected from 600 national entries. Becky's post-Georgia Tech plans include researching and backpacking in Antarctica, Patagonia, and South America for ten months before beginning graduate school at Yale.



Shannon O'Shea

by Dr. Monica Halka

Senior Mechanical Engineering student Shannon O'Shea has been offered a position with NASA after co-oping with the agency four times over the past three years. She will begin her formal position on April 2014 on the Vehicle Integration Team, which coordinates assembly of major elements of aerospace hardware, both in the factory and in the field. She is excited about moving to Houston for more than just a few months this time.



Mike Jasper

by Katie Geddes

Third-year Mechanical Engineering student Mike Jasper recently received the prestigious George Wingfield Semmes Memorial Scholarship. Presented by the ANAK society, this fund rewards engineering students who possess a love for Georgia Tech, leadership ability, academic achievement, and outstanding character. In his application Jasper articulated the need for a new perspective on learning from the point of view of both professors and students. Outside the classroom, Jasper is involved in Georgia Tech Motor Sports and is the Honors Program Student Assistant.



Daniel Soloway

by Dr. Monica Halka

Alumnus Daniel Soloway, Mechanical Engineering 2012, recently moved to Greenville, SC, as a member of General Electric's Edison Engineering Development Program. He is now working on a conceptual design team, trying to figure out how to make fabric wind turbine blades. Daniel is passionate about green energy sources for the future. After two internships with GE as an undergraduate student, he decided they knew how to develop potential in employees. He has flourished in various capacities with them and now has the opportunity to prove himself in the wind turbine field.

Message from the Director

by Dr. Gregory Nobles

When did you learn to read? I don't mean "learn to read" as in the ability to distinguish letters and see them form into words and sentences and meaning. No, I mean "learn to read" as in that moment of personal transformation when you first realized that all those printed words on the page could take you to some different place, to a new awareness of a world you never knew. When did you suddenly discover you could go anywhere, do anything, even be anyone in your mind, just by opening a book?

For me, that moment came at the end of third grade, when a bunch of my little buddies and I had a sleepover at a friend's house. I woke up early the next morning and, not wanting to bother the others, took a book at random off my friend's bookshelf and started to read it—the fourth volume of The Hardy Boys series, *The Missing Chums*. That was it: I was lost, completely gone, and I hated to have to come back for breakfast.

OK, I now know that the alleged author of the book, Franklin W. Dixon, was a pseudonym for a whole stable of authors in a publishing house that cranked out semi-formulaic fiction for young boys and girls—not just the Hardy Boys, but Nancy Drew and Tom Swift and some other less iconic collections, like *The Don Sturdy Series* (really). Still, in my third-grade innocence, I didn't know care about the bigger picture, only that *The Missing Chums* gave me a picture of a life I could barely imagine, where two well-scrubbed teenaged brothers, Frank and Joe Hardy, solved crimes along with their detective father, the wise and admiring Fenton Hardy, and they had motorcycles and a motorboat to help them do it. A motorboat! Frank even had a girlfriend, the winsome Callie Shaw.

Along with a ripping good yarn, *The Missing Chums* gave me some new vocabulary words I had never encountered in the standard Dick-and-Jane literacy lessons at school: "discomfiture," right there on page three, and then "premonition" and "imprecations" and "obdurate" in later pages. In this one book, the Hardy Boys showed me the freedom to think and learn that comes with reading, and I've been seeking that freedom ever since.

I'd like to think you are too, but I have to wonder. According to the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE), only 38.6% of the students entering the Honors Program in Fall 2012 said they read books not assigned for school, but "for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment." That's a bit better than the 25.5% for the whole first-year class entering Tech at the time, but still, both results are disheartening. Can it really be that up to three-fourths of the Tech student body doesn't read for pleasure?

It's hard to find time, I know. We all have various forms of less pleasurable reading foisted upon us—class assignments for you, scholarly books and articles and, even worse, administrative sludge for me. But it's not a question of just finding the time; it's making it. We all need to push aside some of the assignments and carve out some space to set ourselves free with fiction, which works for me, or with whatever sort of reading works for you.

I hope that happens. And in the meantime, I hope you'll think back to that first book that cracked open the door of reading for you. I'd be happy to hear which book did for you what *The Missing Chums* did for me.

Have you seen our new social media sites? Be sure to follow us for updates.



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