The UMES Drama Society presented the Broadway musical One Mo’ Time, by Vernel Bagneris, as its annual dinner theater production last month. The show was special—not just because of its rousing burlesque-style performances—but also because the group’s longtime advisor, Della Dameron-Johnson, has announced her retirement as a member of the English department faculty.

“Mama D,” as she is affectionately known, joined the UMES family 38 years ago. In addition to her classroom duties, she served as advisor to both the drama society and the UMES Gospel Choir. In her resignation letter, Dr. Dameron-Johnson described herself as an advocate the university can count on. “A satisfied customer is the best advertisement an institution can have,” she said. “I stand as a more than satisfied employee who will forever proclaim the excellence of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.”

The affection is mutual. William Wallace, a recent graduate who served as a student director under Dr. Dameron-Johnson’s tutelage, said she helped provide purpose and direction in his life. “Her office was a safe haven and second home,” he said. “It’s where you went for love and laughter.”

Joscelyne Swift Tyler, a graduate who is now a local teacher, has mixed feelings about Dr. Dameron-Johnson’s departure from the classroom. “My heart is overjoyed for this new chapter in (her) life, but it is also saddened for the UMES community as they will be losing a true gem amongst their staff,” she said. “I had the superb opportunity of learning under a number of elite staff at UMES, and (she was) one of the very best.”

**DINNER THEATER IS BITTERSWEET**

Show is the Last for “Mama D” as Full-time Faculty Member

Corey Haynes, a senior English education major, was named outstanding student in the Department of English and Modern Languages at the university’s recent Honors Convocation. Ms. Haynes, a member of the UMES volleyball team, maintains a perfect 4.0 grade point average.

Members of the English department also swept the top awards at a recent event held by the Office of Campus Life. Faculty member Della Dameron-Johnson was named organization advisor of the year, and senior Kyla Bibbins was chosen as the top student leader for her role as general manager of Hawk Radio.

**(Left) Organization Advisor of the Year Della Dameron-Johnson is surrounded by members of the UMES Drama Society.**

**(Right) Student Leader of the Year Kyla Bibbins is flanked by Campus Life staff members Quiana Drummond and James Lunnemon.**

**Photo by Valentine Anamelechi**

*(L to R) Dallas Taylor and Jon’nel Davenport appeared in starring roles in One Mo’ Time.*

*Photo by Jim Glovier*

*(Left) Ms. Haynes is pictured with the award she was honored with.**

**Photo by Matthew Whititker**

**(Right) Student Leader of the Year Kyla Bibbins is flanked by Campus Life staff members Quiana Drummond and James Lunnemon.**

**Photos by Valentine Anamelechi**

**RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE**

English Department Faculty and Students Gather Multiple Awards
WORD PLAY:
WORLD SPORTS

Unscramble the capital letters to discover the sport associated with the country.

Examples:
England - BRYGU          Greece - IPLOMCYS
Answer: rugby                Answer: Olympics

1. Persia - OOPL 6. Canada - CEIKOHYEC
2. Scotland - LOGF 7. Norway - GINKIS
3. Denmark - CEIGAIKSITN 8. Italy - COBICLALB
4. America - LABELSAB 9. Germany - ENNISPNI
5. Japan - OUDJ 10. France - QROUTEC

Answers on Page 6.

Word Play, provided by Dr. Barbara Seabrook, is an Insights monthly feature which explores the creative use of language.

SHARING THEIR RESEARCH
Writing Center Tutors Make Professional Presentation

By Kelsey Tate

Editor’s Note: Ms. Tate is a sophomore English major from Burtonsville, Maryland.

On Saturday April 6, five members of the UMES Writing Center presented at the Mid-Atlantic Writing Centers Association (MAWCA) Conference in California, Pennsylvania. The presenters were the center’s director, Terry Smith, and four peer tutors: NyAsia Brooks, Elizabeth Ranger, Shanay Snead and I.

This was the first group professional presentation put on by the staff of the writing center. To help offset associated costs, we received a competitive travel grant from MAWCA.

We gave a 90-minute panel presentation discussing “Incidental and Insidious Implications: How moving to an Online Scheduling and Record-Keeping Program Affects Tutoring in the Writing Center.”

Although our writing center’s move from a paper system to an online record-keeping system seemed simple, once completed we discovered many incidental and insidious implications. We discussed and further expanded on these implications at the conference.

We began the presentation with Dr. Smith’s overview. Then, each of the four tutors presented the theory, research and practice relevant to two questions about the transition that we researched and answered prior to the conference.

Personally, this was my first professional conference, and it was very enjoyable. It was very interesting and enlightening to speak with other tutors about how their writing centers operate. It also was exciting to present and explain to our audience how our center operates here at UMES. I definitely enjoyed the conference and look forward to doing many more as a staff member of the UMES Writing Center.

TELEVISION FIELD TRIP

Students enrolled in ENGL 238, the department’s TV production class, joined their instructor, Paul Butler, for a recent tour of WBOC TV, the CBS affiliate in Salisbury where Mr. Butler works as an evening news anchor.

“I think this opened their eyes to how much teamwork is needed to run a newscast,” Mr. Butler said. “Several of them are now seriously considering the profession after (their) visit.”

UMES students in the WBOC studio: (L to R, seated) Briana Haley, Carmen Frazier, Arielle Brodnax and Amber Green (L to R, standing) Tiffany Tyner, Montel Laws, Devin Freeland, Juwan Nicholson and Victoria Gomillion

Photo by Paul Butler
Even though Etahe Johnson didn’t plan to become an educator, it may have been inevitable. After all, her father—English faculty member David Johnson—has been a teacher for more than 50 years. “He has been in my ear for years,” she said. “He felt that I had a lot to offer students.” Particularly because Ms. Johnson’s expertise is in industrial technology and manufacturing systems, her father thought she would be especially helpful to female students who seek careers in such a male dominated field. So after working with companies such as Firestone and John Deere, Etahe Johnson joined the UMES faculty this semester as an adjunct instructor in the Department of Technology teaching computer-assisted drawing and design. “I am elated that she has finally realized that teaching is a remarkable vehicle to provide services for making a difference in the lives of students,” Dr. Johnson said.

The Johnsons aren’t the only parent/child combo connected with the UMES English department. Dorothy Bell-Jackson, a UMES graduate, began teaching English composition as an adjunct instructor here in 2009; her mother, Joyce Bell, became an associate professor in the social sciences department last semester. As a mom, Dr. Bell says it’s been rewarding to know her daughter is respected on campus. “She has a good reputation and I have had several students and faculty in the English department tell me that they thought a lot of her,” she said. Neither Ms. Bell-Jackson nor Ms. Johnson have any misgivings about ending up in a classroom on the same campus as their parent. “He looks so happy,” Ms. Johnson said. “I wanted that feeling too.” “It's all positive,” Ms. Bell-Jackson said. “I love living and working close to my mom.”

A group of UMES students traveled to Baltimore recently to compete in events at the annual convention of the National Association of Dramatic and Speech Arts, held this year at Coppin State University.

Lakendra Brown, Tajah Cropper, Colleen Hendrickson, Patrick Lieb and Ashley Soto participated in the Oral Interpretation of Poetry and the Dramatic Monologue categories. The students were accompanied to the conference by English faculty member Della Dameron-Johnson. Dr. Dameron-Johnson, advisor to the UMES Drama Society, served as a judge for the Oral Interpretation of Prose competition and as moderator for the Allen Williams Play Festival.

It made for a busy day; Dr. Dameron-Johnson and some of the students who competed in Baltimore had to rush back to Princess Anne for a performance of the UMES dinner theater that evening.

Faculty member Carole Champagne traveled to Baltimore in April to attend the 37th Comparative Drama Conference hosted by Stevenson University. The keynote speaker was Pulitzer and Tony award winning playwright Edward Albee. Dr. Champagne reports Albee, best known for penning Who’s Afraid of Virginia Wolf, critiqued the current state of commercial theatre with both wit and wisdom.

Composition instructors Sandy Johnston and Bonni Miller made a formal presentation, “Using Learning Management Systems to Increase Student Accountability,” at the College of Southern Maryland’s Student Success Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference in April.

Professor David Johnson presented “Specific Strategies for Increasing the Retention and Graduation Rates of African-American Male College Students” at the annual African-American Male Conference held in April at Baltimore City Community College.

Dr. Johnson also attended the recent Assessment Expo held at Stevenson University’s Owings Mills campus. The Dean of Planning, Assessment and Institutional Research at Prince George’s Community College offered expo attendees a step-by-step blueprint for avoiding the stress associated with a Middle States evaluation.
The coordinator of the department’s English education program, Barbara Seabrook, has created a book on gardening with photographer Shawn Wilhite. Their collaboration, issued by Ladyship Publishing, is titled “Growing with Soul: Two artists join together in sharing nature’s magic.”

The book celebrates her six-year cottage garden project which began with mud and rocks and now is home to hummingbirds, butterflies, turtles and leopard frogs. “Gardening and spending time outdoors is soothing for the soul,” Dr. Seabrook said. “When you can lose yourself in nature, you find serenity and peace.”
Radio listeners can only imagine what their favorite on-air personality looks like. Typically, radio station staff members travel incognito. That’s not the case with the students who participate in Hawk Radio, the Internet radio station supervised by the English department.

The student-managed station has maintained a high public profile this semester, beginning with a day-long remote broadcast from the campus bookstore. DJs took music requests, gave away prizes and entertained the employees, students and guests in the Student Services Center.

Members of Hawk Radio were also active participants in the annual Spring Fest celebration, providing musical entertainment, conducting dance contests and awarding Hawk Radio T-shirts to students who could answer campus trivia questions. But the station’s advisor, English faculty member Marilyn Buerkle, is most proud of a project that took the students out into the community.

The School of the Arts and Professions monthly lecture series turned its attention in April to the dramatic changes underway in the television industry. A highly regarded national media expert was the featured speaker.

Jerry Gumbert, the CEO of Audience Research and Development, delivered remarks titled “You are in Control: Living in a Multimedia Universe” to a packed house in Hazel Hall.

Mr. Gumbert shared statistics which made it abundantly clear that the ability of most people to instantly capture, share and stream video is forcing traditional television companies to rethink how they do business.

He offered some suggestions for those who wish to stand out from their ever-increasing competition, and he assured students that changes in the way we access video will not limit their job prospects.

“Content is still king,” Mr. Gumbert said, indicating that those who create information and entertainment will still be sought after, even though the way the American public chooses to view that content shifts from the living room to a TV-everywhere model.

According to the Division of Institutional Advancement, the Department of English and Modern Languages is the only academic unit at UMES to report 100% participation in this year’s faculty and staff fundraising campaign.

In addition, Department Chair Jacqueline Brice-Finch has established an endowment fund to provide support for department faculty doing doctoral work in accredited programs or doing research leading to publication. The custodian of the fund will be the Dean of the School of the Arts and Professions (SAP).

The current SAP dean, Ray Davis, has also established an endowment fund to support faculty development.
CREATING COMMUNITY

Adjunct public speaking instructor Renee Callaghan has added a new twist to her course this semester. Students who deliver the most effective group projects, as determined by their classmates, are invited to deliver their speeches to the campus community on Hawk Radio, the student-managed Internet radio station.

Ms. Callaghan sought Hawk Radio as a forum because the speeches revolve around subjects of particular interest to UMES students. One section’s winners will discuss how to solve roommate problems; the other will discuss the condition of UMES restrooms as it relates to communicable diseases.

At press time, the logistical arrangements for the collaborative project were still under discussion.

YOU’RE LEAVING US???

Good News and Bad News

Borrowing an apt line from Charles Dickens: it was the best of times; it was the worst of times.

While Department Chair Jacqueline Brice-Finch is happy that Pat Jones-Bailey, the department’s administrative assistant, is being promoted to a position in the Division of Academic Affairs; it means she is losing the capable guidance a longtime staff member can offer to a relatively new department chair.

Dr. Brice-Finch is not the only department member who will miss the superior performance of Ms. Jones-Bailey. English faculty and staff gathered recently at a pot-luck lunch to offer parting gifts and to say good-bye.

A search committee will soon begin the process of interviewing candidates, but until a successor to Ms. Jones-Bailey is selected, the department welcomes Jennifer Wright as a temporary staff member.

ACTING AWARDS

Faculty member Will Rose has been selected to serve on the national nominating committee for the annual Screen Actors Guild television performance awards.

The committee is chosen by random computer lottery from the guild’s membership of professional actors.

Mr. Rose will consider nominees for outstanding performances in female, male and ensemble categories for work presented in either drama, comedy or TV movie/miniseries.

RECRUITING STUDENTS

The English department was well represented at the final campus recruitment fair of the semester, held in conjunction with the annual Spring Fest celebration. Faculty members Marilyn Buerkle, Dean Cooledge, David Johnson and Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones participated.

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