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Learning Experiences from the Fifth Language Arts Pedagogy Conference

By Diana Bloome and Shadira Culbreath

On the days of November 2nd and 3rd 2006, Claflin University's Fifth Conference on Contemporary English and Language Arts Pedagogy in Secondary and Postsecondary Institutions was held in Ministers' Hall on campus. The sessions were well attended by students and faculty.

The first morning, the leader of the fiction workshop was the award-winning short fiction writer Steve Taylor who flew in from California for two days. One of his themes was "Creating Vivid Characters". Steve Taylor discussed different aspects of short fiction. He taught us how to create vivid characters from different short fiction passages. He stated that, "We form characters from a passage from immediate impressions on people without even knowing them." He explained that the observation of a person that we don't know would be a good starting point if we were writing about a character and we got stuck. There was a sheet with four different pictures on it, and we were asked to observe the pictures and tell what we thought about the people. All these skills addressed by Taylor's workshop help writers create a great character.

Steve Taylor was a great influence on our writing skills. We felt that he brought excellent guidelines to Claflin University's Fifth Conference on Contemporary English and Language Arts Pedagogy in Secondary and Postsecondary Institutions that will help students improve their writing skills as well as observational skills.

The second morning, the theme was "Country of the Blind: Sight and Blindness in Reading/ Writing/ Viewing." The most interesting presentation on this day came from an instructor from Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College named Dr. Debbie Gideon whose topic was "Double Blindness of Brain Injury."

Although her speech was without many technological enhancers, Dr. Gideon held the attention of the audience as she explained her encounters with her students, and her identifications of their "blindness." She spoke of how she recommended treatment to some of them and their reluctance to seek treatment. Because of Dr. Gideon, we can now think of brain injury not as a "condition", but more as an acquired disability that really needs treatment.

Not Your Average Baking Competition

By Carlos Jones

Dinner theater at the Fifth Language Arts Pedagogy conference included the staging of "Bake Off." "Bake Off" is a brief one-act play written by Sheri Wilner that plays on the humor involved in one 1997 Pillsbury Bake-off. However, this isn't your ordinary baking contest. Paul, a divorced man, is competing as an example for his non-athletic son, trying to prove that a man's predilections don't have to be in accord with macho tradition. Rita, embittered by years of banishment to the kitchen, is bent on defending the bake-off as a female province. Last year, the largest cash prize in Bake Off history of one million dollars was awarded to a man; this year, Rita, played by Annette Grevious, will make sure that Paul, played by Cedric Rembert, and all the other male entrants get their just desserts. This Pillsbury Baking contest goes from a simple cooking competition to a full battle of the sexes. Insanity ensues when Rita's full rampage begins ending in a wonderfully crafted resolution that I dare not ruin for those who may chance upon this play again. This play addresses everything, including the stigma placed on the two genders. Filled with physical comedy and political satire that were purely the icing on the cake of these two extraordinary actors, this play is sure to please just about anyone with a sweet tooth for twenty minutes of laughter.

It's Show Time!

By Kida Salley and JeAnna Oliver

In the fall semester of 2006, the Claflin University Theatre Ensemble Touring Company Presented "African Tales," a compilation of children's stories brought to life through performance. African dance was also incorporated and choreographed by Cindi Lewis. The stories performed included "Traveling to Tondo" and "Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ear." In the first production, a cat travels to Tondo with friends to marry the city cat, but his trip, prolonged by the needs of friends, is extended so much that by the time he reaches the city cat, she is already married. The lead character, Brandis Francis, played the city cat. "It was cool acting from the perspective of an animal," said Francis on bringing life to her character. "That whole atmosphere was different and exciting". In the second play presented, a mosquito played by

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A Woman Of Many Words With One Message

By Darryl Burt

"I look out my back door to see what I can see so that I can tell what I know" these are some of the profound words Pearl Cleage left Claflin University students with on Friday October 27, 2006. She came and shared her thoughts on topics from love to literature. But she was most pronounced about race, Cleage spoke adamantly about the black consciousness. She felt that the Black people are using race as a crutch. African-Americans only see themselves as black instead of viewing themselves in the same light as W.E.B. Dubois did where one is first African then American, not only one, but in essence a mix of both. Cleage said in the same light "I'm not just black or just a female, I'm black and female everyday."



Pearl Cleage also spoke on the topic of love when she said " We don't see enough love so we don't know what it looks like, you don't hear enough love so you don't know it when you here it." According to Cleage, love is powerful and should be expressed on a daily basis but very rarely does the present generation of intellect

know the difference between love and warm feeling in the heart. Individuals don't come from homes where love is constantly shown but hatred and vengeance is shown daily. Americans need to show more love and compassion.

Pearl Cleage said she was inspired to write at a young age by her parents who constantly read to her, and by her favorite writer Langston Hughes. Cleage admits to trying to be more like Langston Hughes. Cleage has written many books, including *What looks like Crazy on an Ordinary Day*, *I Wish I Had A Red Dress*, and *Some Things I Never Thought I Do*.

CLAFS?

Patrice Cooper and Carlos Jones

It is said that "literature is a power to be possessed, not a body of objects to be studied." The mission of CLAFS, which stands for Claflin Literary Arts and Film Society, wants each student to possess that power. The purpose of CLAFS is to "provide students with an outlet to share and give feedback on their English work, as well as to provide students with an opportunity to expand their knowledge of literature." This year CLAFS held a poetry reading as well as hosted the March Brown Bag Colloquium. Next year CLAFS will be hosting most of the Brown Bag Colloquia, and has already begun looking into ideas for the Brown Bag Colloquium Series. Of course, this could not be done without our faculty.

In addition, CLAFS will be hosting more poetry readings, and is planning to expand its events beyond poetry readings with events such as Book-to-Movie nights. CLAFS is con-

PAECE sponsors Hurricane Katrina memorial projects

By Tiffany R. Belcher

In response to the devastating Hurricane Katrina that took place in New Orleans, Louisiana, the PAECE Program of Claflin University headed by Dr. Miriam Chitiga and Mrs. Annette Grevious decided to create a program full of commemorative events. I felt compelled as a student to interview one of the coordinators of the Katrina Memorial, Mrs. Annette Grevious, on how she felt about this tragedy and the effects it had on her.

Mrs. Grevious, a drama professor at Claflin University, states that when she heard about the hurricane, she was in the privacy of her own home. She was unaware of the magnitude of its destruction. To her, like many of us having the same thinking, it was just another hurricane. She states, "Once I realized the magnitude of the tragedy I was just trying to put myself in the shoes of the people affected by it. I could not fully grasp it until I actually visited New Orleans this past June." In response to the controversy of whether or not the government or President George W. Bush responded to the Katrina victims as quickly as possible, Mrs. Grevious states that the government should have reacted much sooner. "They should have been forewarned of the dangers and had an effective action plan in place. Even though the months have passed from this tragedy, the government can still do much more than what has been done."

Claflin University held a two day memorial dedicated to victims of Hurricane Katrina. The most powerful event that touched Mrs. Grevious was the campus memorial day sponsored by PAECE. During this event they had various displays from Mrs. Grevious and Dr. Chitiga's visit to New Orleans. She says, "We had an opportunity to share some of the stories that had been shared with us. PAECE had a number of performances presented by the PAECE Traveling Performers – both high school and college constituents".

tinually taking steps to better the organization, becoming more and more active on campus with hopes of spreading the love of literature to the students here at this university. In the future, it hopes to have most of the English Department involved in everything that the organization does and will do. However, do not worry, CLAFS is not an exclusive members only club. No jackets here. Anyone can join. Remember: CLAFS wants to instill the power of literature in YOU.



Spanish and French Clubs Offer Many Activities

By Britney Weaver, Kevin Walls, and Khalilah White

What does culture begin with? C.U.—Claflin University is where it all begins. From lyceums to organizations, Claflin promotes versatility and cultural awareness. Nicola Whitley, freshman, served as president for the 2006-2007 academic school year. In an interview, Nicola Whitley says, “the purpose of the Spanish Club is to educate people on the importance of Spanish in today’s society through interactive activities, while providing a fun environment for learning Spanish and different cultural customs.” With membership open to the public regardless of Spanish speaking and comprehension level, Nicola Whitley says, “this club can help anyone realize their dream of speaking Spanish.” The Spanish Club also collaborates with the French Club for the dynamic Foreign Languages Week. This is a week when there is a movie night, Spanish and French Expo to display different cultures, and the highly acclaimed Spanish and French Fashion Show, just to mention a few. The Spanish Club brings cultural entertainment but this is not its only contribution. There is bi-weekly tutoring available free of charge. There is also the goal of connecting with Spanish community in Orangeburg through various types of community service. The Spanish Club appreciates all student and faculty support during events and encourages everyone to get involved for fun in language and culture. On Thursday of every other week, the Spanish and French clubs have coffee and refreshments, and members listen to foreign music. The purpose of the French club is to get students to become more aware of languages other than English and to make them more aware of other cultures so that they can become more competitive in today’s society. The president of the club is Sarah Ukariwo.

The previously mentioned clubs are all collegiate clubs on Claflin’s campus. There is a national collegiate club called Alpha Mu Gamma. Alpha Mu Gamma is the national collegiate foreign language honor society. Not only is it the first foreign language honor society, but it is the largest in the United States. The organization was conceived with hopes of forming a society that rewards outstanding achievement in all foreign languages. It was founded April 29, 1931 at Los Angeles City College by five members of the college’s faculty. From their vision, this great organization was born. Since the society’s conception, over 300 chapters have been chartered at many colleges and universities across the United States as well as Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. Charters have been granted to both private and public institutions in addition to two-year colleges. The society is known for several activities, which include the National Foreign Language Week, the quarterly published newsletter, and national and regional conferences. National Foreign Language Week was endorsed by each President of the United States since its declaration by President Eisenhower in 1957.

Membership is open to those students that have received a grade of “A” in two quarters/semesters of a foreign language classes in college or high school. Upon initiation into Alpha Mu Gamma, members receive a parchment certificate of

membership and a scroll-shaped gold pin. The society also offers several scholarships to members on a competitive basis such as those who are members of Alpha Mu Gamma and who are planning to continue their study of foreign language.

Claflin has the Nu Tau chapter of Alpha Mu Gamma, which was chartered on October 5, 2005. Fifteen students were offered and they accepted membership into the newly formed chapter. The charter members of the Nu Tau chapter are Leigh Ann Williams, Simone LeGendre, Trimease King, Lakisha Lockhart, Juan Donaldson, DeeDra Butler, Ashley Brown, Joslyn Davis, Sierra Hughes, Emily Johnson, Candace Newson, Lakeasha Perry, DeeAndria Robinson-Brown, and Kida Salley. The Nu Tau chapter of Claflin University continues to honor the principles that Alpha Mu Gamma was founded on, and continues to serve as motivation for all foreign language students at Claflin University as well as other institutions across the United States.

Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell...

Diana Bloome and Vanessa Thomas

Here, at Claflin University, the faculty and staff have joined with students to help enact the Claflin imperative. In doing so, these individuals have been collectively assisting students through out the campus in the school’s very own Campus Writing Center, located on the top floor in the Grace Thomas Kennedy building, which is more commonly known as GTK. In the Writing Center, students are allowed to use the computers at their disposal, along with seeking assistance with their papers from our faculty and student tutors. All students who wish to obtain help with their work are provided a Progress Report Portfolio. This portfolio is designed to keep a record of the student’s progress, as well as to give future tutors a brief understanding of what the student needs to improve, along with suggestions from past tutors as a means to eliminate the repetition of errors.

Even though the Writing Center has been a major asset to this campus, as well as its students, it still has its own imperfections, as any other operation does. On many occasions, students including ourselves, have ventured out to the Writing Center to print an assignment moments before a class, or even use the computer to finish an assignment. In great disappointment, one may find out that it closes from the hours of 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Those students who have frequently staffed the Writing Center know the reality of its early closure and late openings. It is a fact that tutors were not coming during their scheduled hours, which left students unable to access the services of the Writing Center during these hours.

The faculty and staff have been working extremely hard to solve this problem by strongly advising and encouraging tutors to become more involved in the operation of the Writing Center. However, a better solution would be to hire a full-time employee to work in the Writing Center, assisting students between the hours of 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. The availability of the Writing Center is very crucial to students, and should be taken as serious as any other campus operation. If this solution is
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