

# TABLATURE



Florida Institute  
of Technology

NEWSLETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND COMMUNICATION • FALL 2004 • NUMBER 10

## HOMELESS BUT SURVIVING *by Matthew Ruane*

I have been through a lot in my life by the age of 37, but nothing quite like what I have had to go through in the last few weeks. My father dying from a brain tumor three months after my college graduation was perhaps the worst event I have ever faced. My dissertation/thesis adviser suffering a mental breakdown after her husband was killed and her son injured by a hit-and-run driver ranks right near the top of my bad experiences. Yet despite these experiences, I have managed to make a successful teaching career for myself here at Florida Tech. However, Hurricane Jeanne, the last of the three summer storms to strike our area, did more than blow down a few tree limbs. It left me homeless and most of my possessions destroyed.

I had survived Hurricane Charley in August with some fallen tree limbs

and lights flickering. Hurricane Frances knocked down more tree limbs, flooded my yard, and knocked out the power for two days. Yard debris had been taken away, everything was sealed and secured, and I retreated to a friend's house to ride out the latest storm, Jeanne. As the storm was still gusting through the area on Sunday afternoon, I drove off to survey the damage to my house, expecting nothing more than severe flooding and more tree limbs down. However, Hurricane Jeanne took the roof off of two-thirds of my home and destroyed three-fourths of my personal belongings.

I was renting a late 1950s home from friends, a sturdy home that had survived numerous storms with nothing more than a few creaks and groans here or there. I had been living there for six years, the longest single stay at any residence

I called "home" since first going off to college in 1984. On that Sunday afternoon, having waded through shin deep water to get to my house's front door, I discovered it was raining in most of the house, and all but a single room, which was largely empty, were either flooded or exposed to the elements. I left, nearly in tears, vowing to come back the next day to survey the damage and begin saving what I could.

Yet classes at Florida Tech were resuming a few days later, and for nearly two weeks, I spent nearly every free moment either boxing and salvaging what I could, or teaching one of the six classes, including directed and independent studies, I have this semester. Growing mold on every surface, a room still flooded with water (and still

*continued on back cover*

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, NABIL MATAR

In the past eight months, Nabil Matar, Professor of English and Head of the humanities and communication department, was invited to lecture at the universities of Cordoba, Exeter, Pennsylvania State, Chicago and Cornell. He also gave the annual Shakespeare lecture at the Globe Theatre in London. "It was exhausting," he commented, "but also exhilarating."

Dr. Matar's research has examined both the impact of the Arab-Islamic civilization on early modern Europe,

Britain in particular, and the place of the Arabic contribution to the current debate between Orientalism and Occidentalism. Matar argues that the Arabic civilization of the early modern period sheds important light on European political and literary works—"Othello" being an excellent example. Furthermore, and focusing on relations between Britain, France, and Spain on the one hand, and the region of the Triple Maghrib on the other, Matar argues against the claims that the Arabs had not been "curious" about the European West: "Whether you look at archival material in royal letters, ambassadorial reports, or captivity oral narratives, the evidence is overwhelming to an extensive familiarity with Christendom," he observed. Matar has also shown how Islamdom was much more tolerant of Jews and Christians than Christendom was of Jews or Muslims. His paper at the University of Cordoba

included a section entitled "The Christ of the Maghrib." In Granada, three hours away from Cordoba, Matar visited the Sacromonte Abbey where some of that veneration to Mary had been inscribed on Lead Books and "discovered" in the late sixteenth century.

Dr. Matar has just finished his book on "Britain and Barbary, 1589-1689" (forthcoming from the University Press of Florida). He is currently working on another book entitled "Europe through Arab Eyes: The Western Mediterranean, 1578-1727." Some of his forthcoming presentations include a paper at the MLA national convention in Philadelphia; a paper on the Abrahamic Faiths at the University of Michigan; and in May, he will deliver the keynote address on "Pirates in the Mediterranean" at the University of Wales. "In many respects," he noted, "Florida Tech, with its rich variety of students and colleagues, along with its dedicated librarians, has been the inspiration for me."



# HUMANITIES AND COMMUNICATION FACULTY

## DEPARTMENT HEAD

Nabil Matar, English, Ph.D.  
University of Cambridge

## FACULTY

### PROFESSORS

Gordon Patterson, History, Ph.D.  
University of California—Los Angeles  
Rudolph Stoeckel, English, Ph.D.  
Loyola University

### ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS

Randall Alford, Applied Linguistics, Ph.D.  
Florida State University  
Robert Shearer, Philosophy, Ph.D.  
Florida State University  
Judith Strother, Applied Linguistics, Ph.D.  
Eindhoven University of Technology  
Robert Taylor, History, Ph.D.  
Florida State University  
Jane Tolbert, Mass Communication, Ph.D.  
University of Florida

### ASSISTANT PROFESSORS

Andrew Aberdein, Ph.D. Logic and Metaphysics  
University of St. Andrews  
Marcia Denius, M.F.A. Creative writing  
Vermont College  
Sharon Irvin, English, M.A.  
University of Wisconsin  
Lars R. Jones, Art History, Ph.D.  
Harvard University  
Lisa Perdigao, English, Ph.D.  
Northeastern University  
Alan Rosiene, English, Ph.D.  
Northwestern University  
Carol Shehadeh, English, M.A.  
University of Central Florida  
Angela Tenga, Ph.D. English  
Purdue University  
Peter-Otto Uhr, Languages, Ph.D.  
University of Florida

### INSTRUCTORS

Penny Bernard, M.S.  
Chris Frongillo, Ph.D.  
Bill Leach, M.A.  
Anna Montoya, M.A.  
Mary Mullins, M.A.  
David Mumford, Ed.D.  
Matthew Ruane, M.A.  
Joyce Stottler, M.A.  
Janice Teegen, M.A.  
Fontaine Wallace, M.S.Ed.

### ADJUNCT FACULTY

Douglas Bailey, Ph.D.  
Andrei Belyi, M.A.  
Candace Bowering, M.S.  
Tina Christodouleas, M.S.  
William Picard, Ph.D.



## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

I emerged from a summer of balmy nights and days of research to be greeted by a two-hurricane welcome to the fall semester.

The presentation by communication seniors on their internships was re-scheduled three times due to hurricane evacuations and power outages. Our staff, the technology people and the maintenance crews worked long hours to get the campus operative after hurricanes Frances and Jeanne. Faculty and students are feeling the pressure of Saturday classes, our makeup “snow” days. At the same time, faculty members are struggling to maintain research deadlines and professional commitments. Matt Ruane, an instructor in the department, has recounted his personal experience in “Homeless but Surviving.”

Nights without power illuminated by candles and calls from family and friends, both in the States and abroad, gave me ample opportunity to reconnect and gain perspective. Our conversations quickly left the hurricane headlines (yes, nearly two million were without power) and shifted to a more pressing concern—the current political landscape, which is related to my research on censorship and evasion in the seventeenth century, a period of scientific discovery.

This period is associated with the Inquisition’s sentencing of Galileo and condemnation of the Copernican propositions. It is also a period in which the press was used as an instrument of royal propaganda, making it extremely difficult for members of the reading public to obtain accurate accounts from the press. Instead, they used more reliable alternative channels such as newspapers published in the Protestant border states or personal correspondence, generally not subject to censorship.

Is it so different today? Under the guise of a free press, the mainstream media have relinquished their role as the Fourth Estate, or government watchdog, in the face of corporate ownership. The general public, too, has been lulled

to complacency, expecting the media to subject social, environmental and political issues to an unbiased scrutiny. Furthermore, as pointed out in an article by John Cook in the *Chicago Tribune* (9/19/04), although more channels of media are available, viewers are selecting media outlets that support their political orientation.

In the New York Times Book Review section, Al Gore commented on *Boiling Point*, a book that provides an indictment of the media and other factors contributing to our problem of global warming. Corporate ownership and what Gore describes as the “aggressive and persistent campaign organized and financed by coal and oil companies” have misled the public about the serious nature of environmental issues.

Science, politics and access to information continue to be inextricably related. In other areas, the “politicization” of science and control of information by political powers have contributed to a distorted sense of reality. Like 17th-century France, the state-supported Royal Academy of Sciences enabled the politicians to determine membership in the academy and identify areas of research to fund. But there is some hope for today. Unlike the 17th century in which critics of the monarchy were silenced often through exile or death, scientists and concerned citizens within the system are now speaking out.

## THANK YOU

I would like to thank the faculty, staff, and students for contributing to this issue. My enduring appreciation goes to my editorial assistant, Marilyn Goravitch, who brings expertise and humor to this endeavor.

Jane T. Tolbert

## TABLATURE

is a publication of  
Florida Institute of Technology  
College of Science and Liberal Arts  
Department of Humanities  
and Communication

150 West University Boulevard  
Melbourne, Florida 32901-6975

Phone (321) 674-8073

Web site [www.fit.edu/AcadRes/hu-com/](http://www.fit.edu/AcadRes/hu-com/)

Editor Jane Tolbert

Design and Layout University Publications

## WELCOME

**Delilah Caballero**, staff assistant, joined the Department of Humanities and Communication in July. Her previous work experience in different capacities enabled her to work directly with Florida Tech. She says she looks forward to a “lengthy and fulfilling career at the university.”

## NEW FACULTY



**David Mumford** I received my doctorate from Teachers College, Columbia University in New York City.

My area of teaching and research at Florida Tech is in English as a Second Language (ESL).

I'm a "Navy Brat" and grew up in many different places around the U.S.; however, I graduated from the following schools in the local area: Cocoa Beach Elementary School, Edgewood Jr. High School (M.I.)

and Cocoa Beach High School.

**Lisa Perdigao:** I received my Ph.D. in English from Northeastern University in Boston (May 2004), my M.A. (English; 1999) and B.A. (English and Philosophy; 1997) from Boston College. My dissertation, "Encrypting the Body: Entombment, Exhumation, and Figuration in Twentieth-Century American

Literature," focuses on the representation of death in modern and post-modern poetry and fiction, on issues of memory, language, and identity.

I primarily focus on 20th century American literature, but my work extends to research and writing in cultural studies and in children's and adolescent literature. I taught at Boston College, Northeastern University, and Merrimack College (all in MA, where I am originally from) before coming here.

In addition to composition courses, I have taught courses in American literature, cultural studies, on the representation of death in American literature, and in children's and adolescent literature.



## GRADUATING SENIORS

*Profile of Jenee Sadorf by Tiffany Mayo, Senior, Communication*

She's the quintessential, all-American, girl-next-door. The type of girl you'd see in a Ralph Lauren Polo advertisement, riding a horse through the North Dakota plains. She's also a high achiever and has the self-confidence needed to compete in the business world.

Jenee Sadorf, a senior at Florida Tech, will graduate in May 2005 with a bachelor's degree in business and professional communication.

She has been involved with many activities at Florida Tech. She was voted vice president of the Florida Public Relations Association, worked at the Alumni House and played volleyball during Intramurals. But the activity that had the most impact on Jenee was her internship last summer at an events company in Tampa Bay, coordinating corporate events and private parties.

*Profile of Tiffany Mayo, Graduating Senior, by Eric Saalfeld*

If Tiffany Mayo produced an autobiography, then the activity of writing, for work and for pleasure would emerge as one of its themes. Tiffany has written fiction and non-fiction, for academic, commercial and private consumption.

Currently Tiffany works at Boeing under a contract for government space systems where she is the only group member charged with document preparation and is solely responsible for the group's written output. She explains that she does not get to do much writing anymore but spends most of her day rewriting and editing.

Tiffany has taken advantage of Boeing's education benefit and enrolled in Florida Tech's communication program.

She says that Florida Tech does an excellent job teaching technical editing, layout and design, and professional communications. But she said students should gain first-hand workplace experience before investing too much educational capital.

"They should get the opportunity to spend a week shadowing someone in the profession they are studying. That way they will get a real understanding of the different facets of a career."

Though her degree program and job tasks emphasize scientific and technical communication, Tiffany still writes fiction and drama. She credits the creative writing course taught by Marcia Denius as an inspiration and has submitted personal pieces for publication.

Tiffany's full-time employment and full-time education make heavy demands on her schedule. After graduation, she plans to travel and knock out the screenplay that, shunning technology, she is drafting by hand.

## INTERNSHIP

*Jeff Nelson, Senior, Communication*

My summer internship was focused on instructional design at Carley Corporation in Orlando, Fla., which specializes in analyzing, designing, developing and implementing custom training programs. The company serves various customers, most of whom are government and DoD organizations. For three months I worked with instructional designers and graphic artists to develop Web-based training for the U.S. Navy's Surface Warfare Officer's School, which prepares naval officers for sea duty.



*Carol Shebadeh and interns, Jeff Nelson and Jenee Sadorf*

## CAPSTONE PROJECTS FALL 2004

Ross Fenton, "William Barrett and the Existential Project." Dr. Robert Shearer is the Capstone adviser.

Emily Main, "Women in the Florida Legal Profession." Dr. Robert Taylor is the Capstone adviser.

## FLORIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING

From April 14–17, 2004, Florida Tech hosted the 102nd Annual Meeting of the Florida Historical Society, the state's oldest existing cultural organization. Twenty-seven papers were presented, including those by Marcia Denius, Robert Shearer, and Angela Tenga of the Department of Humanities and Communication. Dr. Michael V. Gannon, University of Florida, received the Jullian Prescott Meritorious service award. The Department of Humanities and Communication hosted a wine and cheese party for participants.

The event was organized by Drs. Robert Taylor and Gordon Patterson and attended by Florida Tech president, Dr. Anthony Catanese.



*Ted Van Italy; Nick Wynne; Larry Rivers; Anthony J. Catanese*



*Marcia Denius*

## MAD QUEENS AND TALKING RABBITS:

REFLECTIONS ON 35 DAYS' RAMBLE THROUGH MALAYSIA AND SUMATRA *by Gordon Patterson*

Jonathan Rabin, the British essayist, recently observed: "Traveling English abroad tend to see the rest of the world as consisting of mad queens, talking rabbits and the rest." There is more than a grain of truth in Rabin's whimsy. When confronted with something different from our everyday experiences and expectations, all too frequently most relegate the unknown and unfamiliar to the realm of "mad queens and talking rabbits." American academics and intellectuals are no exception. This lesson was brought home to me on innumerable occasions during a 35-day perambulation through west Malaysia and on Sumatra.

My trip to Southeast Asia was sponsored by the U.S. State Department as part of its Fulbright Hays Group Study Projects. The program was coordinated through the University of Hawaii and the East West Center. I entered the competition to join the Fulbright Hays Study Group because I hoped to use my experiences in Malaysia and Indonesia as the basis for expanding the Asian studies curriculum at Florida Tech.

The Fulbright Study Group made its way through peninsular Malaysia and Sumatra visiting schools, factories, hospitals, mosques, temples and universities.

The contrast between Malaysia and Sumatra was striking. After a five-day intensive introduction to Malay culture,

our travels in peninsular Malaysia took us to Melaka, the Cameron Highlands, Kuala Kangsar, Ipoh, Khota Bara and Penang.

Midway through the trip we traveled by ferryboat to Medan in northern Sumatra. Medan, a city of 2 million, teeters on the edge of chaos. Congestion, an infrastructure inadequate to the population's needs and poverty combine in a way lamentably typical for the developing world. And yet, the people we encountered (professors, students, engineers, factory workers and people on the street) were unfailingly gracious and helpful. The Fulbright Study Group was one of the first U.S. government sanctioned bodies to visit Sumatra since 9/11. From Medan we moved south traveling overland to Lake Toba where we visited the Bataks. Central Sumatra is one of the most beautiful places in the world. Active volcanoes, verdant green rice paddies and fast running streams combine to create a picture postcard landscape. Nineteenth century European travelers returned from Toba (if they survived) with harrowing tales of the Bataks' cannibalism. By the early 20th century German and Dutch missionaries succeeded in Christianizing the Bataks. Today the Bataks are the largest Christian minority in the predominantly Muslim Indonesia. Later we visited western Sumatra staying in Padang and the mountain village



of Bukit Tingi with the Minanagkabau people, a Muslim ethnic group that is matriarchal.

This trip to Southeast Asia provided the materials for a new course at Florida Tech. In the fall semester 2005, I propose to offer a course entitled "The Malay World: Culture, Religion and Ethnicity in Southeast Asia." The central themes of the course will grow out of our discussion of the complex relationship between ethnicity, religion and the modernization process in west Malaysia and on Sumatra. My long-range objective is to make this course the first component in a four-part survey of Asian civilizations. The other courses will present surveys of China, India and Japan.

A second outcome of this summer's travels is directly related to my work as an environmental historian. This summer I collected a substantial amount of

*continued on back cover*

## 20TH ANNIVERSARY HUMANITIES LECTURE SERIES 2004–2005

*Gleason Center, 4:30 p.m.*

**December 12, 2004**

Holiday Concert presented by Space Coast Flute Orchestra

*Hartley Room, 7 p.m.*

**January 20, 2005**

Topic: "As seen from the angle of her death." Revisiting Zora Neale Hurston's Burial Plot.

*Dr. Lisa Perdigao*

*Hartley Room, 7 p.m.*

**February 17, 2005**

Topic: Pilot Tower Communication—A Formula for Disaster

*Dr. Judith Strother*

*Hartley Room, 7 p.m.*

**March 17, 2005**

Topic: Florida as a Virtual Reality

*Professor Marcia Denius*

# A NIGHT AT THE OPERA

by Matt Jeselnik, *Sophomore, Communication*

It's March 22, 2004 and I find myself seated in the 31st seat of Row E, orchestra level at the Bob Carr Center for Performing Arts in Orlando, and all I can think to myself is, "How in the world did I end up here, at the opera, of all places?"

I knew of the theatrical world from a high school drama class as well as the world of the symphony, growing up hearing my father playing the bassoon in the Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra. I developed a keen ability to avoid dozing off, but how would I remain awake for three and a half hours? Opera? The Italian, the Latin, the French? I wasn't even sure what language this was written in! The action itself is so incredibly slow relative to the action-filled fast-paced feature-films my generation is used to seeing every weekend.

This would be my second opera and I was still skeptical. At the same time, I could tell a widening of my artistic tastes was in order. The curtain had yet even to rise on the first act. I had yet to witness two of opera's most brilliant arias, "Questa o Quella" and "La Donna e Mobile," as well as the depth and complexity of the deformed jester, Rigoletto. True, I was growing to enjoy some of the classic tunes, the elaborate stage design and the blend of music and

drama. I was on my way to escaping the ranks of those who laugh at the mention of opera.

Not even a month prior to Rigoletto, I was brushing the dust off my black dress shoes and tying my tie—a rare exercise—to venture with three classmates to see *Tosca*, a performance at the King Center for the Performing Arts in Melbourne. It was February 21 that the Teatro Lirico d'Europa presented *Tosca*, fully staged with a 50-member orchestra, performed in Italian with English super-titles and featuring traditional Italian staging and outstanding international soloists from Europe and the United States. The Teatro Lirico d'Europa group had toured Europe with great success under conductor Metodi Matakiev.

*Tosca* is the passionate and violent story of Roman singer Floria Tosca, her lover, the artist Cavaradossi, and the evil and manipulative Police Inspector Scarpia, who conspired to use the two lovers for his own political ends and to satisfy his own lust for Tosca. Set in Rome at the time of Napoleon's advance into the city, *Tosca* is filled with the dramatic music of one of opera's most popular composers, Giacomo Puccini.

In his long life Puccini wrote only 12 operas, three of them one-acts designed

to be performed together. Of these, the most famous are *La Bobème* (1896), *Tosca* (1900) and *Madame Butterfly* (1904). His thrilling opera, *Tosca*, combines great situations, unforgettable characters and an exploration of philosophical and religious ideas, providing an entertaining evening for all who attended the Carr Center that evening.

But this is not where it began! Well, *Tosca* with Puccini and its history and all that, yes—but not for me. For me it all began with the class. It is the class that I have to thank for this growing fixation. Twice a week, students turned a curious ear to the elaborate arias and choruses emanating from the A110 lecture hall in the Skurla building seeming very misplaced in the halls of aeronautical science. Led by Dr. Peter-Otto Uhr, HUM 3185: Opera-Music Theater covers the history of opera from its beginnings to the present.

Am I on my way to becoming an opera connoisseur, steeped in the operas, their composers and even premiere locations from the baroque to the post-modern? Or am I here after the lure of the vibrant social atmosphere? I could start by realizing that Rigoletto was written in Italian!

## FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

### ANDREW ABERDEIN

"William Burnside," "Alfred Bray Kempe," "Thomas Pennington Kirkman." *Dictionary of 19th-century British scientists*. B. Lightman, (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 2004).

"Balderdash and Chicanery: Science and Beyond," in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Philosophy: Fear and Trembling in Sunnydale*, *J. Popular Culture and Philosophy* series, vol. 4

### RUDOLPH STOECKEL

with Nabil Matar, "Europe's Mediterranean Other: The Moor." *The Arden Critical Companions*, gen. eds., Andrew Hadfield and Paul Hammond (*The Arden Shakespeare*, 2004), 230-252.

### NABIL MATAR

"The Maliki Imperialism of Ahmad al-Mansur: The Moroccan Invasion of Sudan, 1591." *Imperialisms*. Ed. Elizabeth Sauer and Balchandra Rajan (New York: Palgrave, 2004), 147-161.

"al-Ayyashi," "al-Ghazzal," "al-Ghassani," "al-Mawsuli," "Nasiri Khusro and Palestine." *Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia*. Ed. Jennifer Speake (Fitzroy Dearborn: New York and London, 2003).

### ROBERT TAYLOR

"Space Travel and Exploration." *Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia*. Ed. Jennifer Speake (Fitzroy Dearborn: New York and London, 2003)

### JANE TOLBERT

"Censorship and Travel Writers," "François le Vaillant," "Manuscript Hunters." *Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia*. Ed. Jennifer Speake (Fitzroy Dearborn: New York and London, 2003).

## THE THREAD

*During her summer trip to New York City, graduating senior **Mischka Hylton** interviewed musician and composer Joseph Joubert, and here is her story:*

### INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH JOUBERT BY MISCHKA HYLTON, GRADUATING SENIOR, COMMUNICATION.

Today, while walking along the streets of Manhattan he is called “The Great Joubert” and “Maestro,” names that encompass the breadth and depth of his musical skills.

Joseph Joubert says he has received a gift from God—that of music threaded into the tapestry of his life.

Joubert began his music career at the age of 8, when he listened to his mother play the theme from the opera Aida on the piano. His interest was sparked and he began to express his musical calling, playing by ear without instruction until the age of 13.

He studied at the Manhattan School of Music, rival to Juilliard in New York City and received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in music.

“Maestro just came about from people seeing the many facets of my musicality,

and that’s what comes to mind for them,” Joubert said.

Joubert’s uniqueness stems from his expertise in playing, composing, arranging, conducting and orchestrating. What he has accomplished in the past 20 years has been a prodigious array of musical styles, an eclectic mix of rhythm and passion that spins through the hearts of his audiences. He works in classical, jazz, spiritual, pop, R & B, Broadway and gospel music.

“My hymn and spiritual transcriptions are what make me stand out from others. There are many, many pianists all over the world but none can create these unique arrangements. When I perform them, audiences are taken to another sphere, so I am told.”

As musical director for the Three Mo’ Tenors, which premiered in 2001, Joubert considers this show a recognition of his skill and talent and his ability to understand and play several genres of music. Tenors was the debut of three African-American operatic tenors who sang in seven musical styles.

Joubert was nominated for a Grammy as producer, arranger and keyboardist for the Centurymen’s Beautiful Star CD

in the category of Best Classical Cross-Over Album. Recently, he was orchestrator for Tony Kushner’s Caroline, or Change described as “the best serious musical on Broadway in years.”

Raised in a deeply spiritual family headed by a Baptist preacher father, Joubert went to church every Sunday, a ritual that has sculpted his foundation in faith. He strongly believes his faith contributes to his being a calm and centered person.

“I don’t approach experiences as obstacles. Everything that takes place is like a thread, a continuous thread.”

One highlight in his life filled with music was receiving international acclaim from a political leader. He performed with soprano Kathleen Battle before presidents Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin in 1994. Yeltsin was so impressed with Joubert’s performance of Amazing Grace, that he asked for copies of the sheet music to take back to Russia.

The threads of his music tapestry will continue to weave his destiny as he evolves, personally and musically.

## COELHO/WATSON WEDDING

*by Robert Taylor*

Humanities and communication faculty made history when Dr. Robert Taylor, a notary, performed the first-ever wedding ceremony for recent Florida Tech graduate Rudy Coelho. Fondly remembered as “Rudy Junior,” Coelho and his bride

Shannon Watson opted for late-night nuptials in the All Faith Center on campus on April 3, 2004.

After a honeymoon trip to Hawaii, the Coelhos intend to settle in Palm Bay.

This joyful event is again proof that there is no limit to what our faculty will do to help their students during and beyond their Florida Tech years!



## WORKSHOP: CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING EXCELLENCE

Professor Carol Shehadeh, undergraduate communication program chair, worked with CTLE co-director Wade Shaw, Professor of Engineering Management, to design and lead an intensive seven-day workshop on creative teaching for select Florida Tech faculty. Invited workshop leaders included managers from the Disney Institute as well as Rolf Smith, author of The Seven Levels of Change. Department of Humanities and Communication faculty selected to participate were professors Marcia Denius and Angela Tenga.

## BOOK REVIEW *by Angela Tenga*

THE MOSQUITO WARS, BY GORDON PATTERSON, *University Press of Florida, 2004*

In the 2004 hurricane season, Florida residents whose once-comfortable homes have been ripped open, flooded in knee-deep water and invaded by native flora and fauna have rediscovered a central principle of life in the Sunshine State: this subtropical “paradise” is a wilderness made habitable through the power of technology. Weeks without electricity and air conditioning have provided a painful reminder that humans do not control their environment as much as they’d like to think they do. Moreover, flooded drainage areas and abundant supplies of pooled and puddled water have produced highly favorable conditions for one of Florida’s most notorious residents. The day of the mosquito has dawned again.

As Floridians face a renewed battle against one of their state’s oldest inhabitants, *The Mosquito Wars: A History of Mosquito Control in Florida* presents lessons that most people would rather learn from a book than from personal experience. Gordon Patterson details the history of a process that was critical in making Florida one of the fastest-growing states in the US: the effort to bring the thriving native mosquito population under control.

After a preliminary overview of references to mosquitoes in the literature of antiquity, Patterson’s book focuses on the history of mosquito control in late nineteenth and twentieth-century Florida. Patterson guides readers through the various mechanical, biological, chemical and cultural means that have helped transform a sweltering, pest-infested jungle into one of the most popular American relocation and travel destinations. The book traces the successes and failures of such measures as the construction of mosquito impoundments, the introduction of natural enemies, the deployment of insecticides

and the use of public education programs.

However, Patterson’s study is more than a survey of mosquito-borne disease outbreaks and corresponding measures taken by scientists and government officials. It consistently highlights the human element in the battle between man and mosquito. Prominent figures in this battle, such as Joseph Porter, “the father of mosquito control in Florida” (17), are seen not just in their organizational roles, but as characters whose experiences and motivations shaped the war as much as the technological advances that marked its turning points (like the development of the controversial pesticide DDT).

Besides depicting the war’s human heroes, Patterson also pays due attention to his characterization of the villain. In fact, the blood-sucking parasite whose bite brings problems ranging from the familiar annoying itch to malaria or yellow fever is presented with a surprising note of deference. Patterson respects the efficiency of this well-adapted creature that is best understood not as a single insect, but as a host of species with varying needs, habits and threat potentials. He notes that a trait common to all mosquitoes, though, is that they are “notorious for not respecting political boundaries (123).”

This book is not only for entomologists, historians and Floridians. Patterson’s assertion that “Mosquito control in Florida is a metaphor for the relationship between human beings and their environment” (14) expresses the philosophical appeal of his study.

Anyone with an interest in natural science, the environment, human drama, or the role of technology in everyday life will find something of value in *The Mosquito Wars*.

## POETRY CORNER, VIRTUALLY FOREVER

Just as I decide that forever is entirely too long,

Jared declares he’s invented a plastic that will forever outlast!

a glue to attach the limbs and leaves now falling from Disney’s fake trees. The tourists are safe; the boughs will not break!

And soon pasted trees like magic will spread, immune to drought and disease

and for eternity guaranteed!

Succulent fruits, silicone implants, will swing

from ever-green branches shading the astroturf

where scores of plastic flamingoes flock.

No wild vines, no leaves to be raked.

No dirt to ruin matron’s fake nails!

No more dead wood, but no need for pencils today!

No more rings to be counted, but, hey ... in counterfeit times, nobody’s counting.

But me.

I glance at the white band against the tan of my finger left by the rings

I vowed would remain there forever.

I try again to imagine eternity,

and this time the darkness is plastic.

*Marcia Denius*

*Published in Florida English 2003, Vol. 1, page 64*

## CONFERENCES

Professors Rudolph Stoeckel and Peter-Otto Uhr in the Department of Humanities and Communication presented papers at the 20th Anniversary Conference of the National Technology and Social Science Conference held in Las Vegas, Nevada, April 14–16, 2004.

Dr. Stoeckel’s paper, “Machiavelli as a Satirist,” discusses Machiavelli’s “mandrake” (c. 1515) as a vivid illustration of art as social critique. The bawdy and scatological play is as much satire on man with contemporary relevance as condemnation of Medicean Florence.

Dr. Uhr’s paper on “Opera and Society” analyzes the interrelationship between the theater in general and opera/musical theater in particular and society, with emphasis on the potential of opera to sensitize people to the full range of human emotion.

Both papers have been selected for publication in the *National Social Science Association Perspectives Journal*.

### *Homeless but Surviving continued from cover*

currently flooded with several inches of water despite a tarp on the roof) that eventually attracted leeches and even a baby alligator, ceilings falling in, and the horrendous smell of rot and mold made life miserable. At least I didn't have to stay in the now unsafe building that used to be my home. Ending up back at my friend Eric's house, at least I had a dry roof over my head and a place to store 20 years of belongings. Everything I could save fits into one-third of his one car garage and a single closet.

Like many, I have spent endless hours

on the phone with FEMA, the Small Business Administration, and my insurance adjuster. At least I had renter's insurance that should help to replace most of my belongings. I looked for places to live, but they were either outside my budget (if they were available), or were filled with other homeless people and families. For the moment, everyday life continues and is filled with classes, student advising or working with the Crimson staff. Several members of the University community offered their support and assistance in the storm's aftermath, including Dean Gordon Nelson and my Department Chair Nabil Matar. Many of my colleagues in the humanities

and communication department also have offered kind words of encouragement and support through what could best be considered "trying times." My students, many of whom have gone above and beyond to offer their support and assistance, including several of the university's Greek fraternities, helped to bring a measure of normality back to my daily life.

I am still homeless, and my life scattered to the winds. However, I did discover that I do have a different sort of "home" at Florida Tech, one that has made this entire experience easier to bear.

### *Mad Queens and Talking Rabbits: continued from page 4*

material on the pioneering work of Malcolm Watson in organizing the anti-malaria campaign in Malaysia at the beginning of the 20th century. Briefly put, Ronald Ross's discovery of the malarial mosquito cycle in 1898 catalyzed a tremendous interest in mosquito control. In 1899, the Liverpool and London Schools of Tropical Medicine were formed with the express goal of waging war against tropical diseases throughout the British colonial world. This effort was

described as the "conquest of the tropics." In 1900, the Institute for Medical Research was opened in Kuala Lumpur.

Watson was a young English physician dispatched to organize British public health and sanitation efforts in Malaysia. By chance, Watson, who had no entomological training, discovered that three species of mosquitoes were responsible for most of the malaria present in peninsular Malaysia.

I propose to develop a component in my environmental history course around

Watson's success in using wetland management (cutting down the mangroves), drainage and placement of "coolie lines" (plantation worker living quarters) to control malaria. It is largely because of Watson's work that substantial numbers of Chinese and Tamil immigrants were able to come to Malaysia in the first decades of the 20th century. (I will present a paper on Watson's "species sanitation" work in November at the annual meeting of the Florida Mosquito Control Association.

SC-524-1004

## **ALUMNI: SEND US YOUR NEWS!**

Tell us about your career and family life; photos and business cards welcome! Contact us through our Web site at [www.fit.edu/AcadRes/hu-com/](http://www.fit.edu/AcadRes/hu-com/), send an E-mail to [mgoravit@fit.edu](mailto:mgoravit@fit.edu) or snail mail the information requested below to:

Marilyn Goravitch  
Florida Institute of Technology  
Department of Humanities and Communication  
150 W. University Blvd.  
Melbourne, FL 32901

- Name
- Major/year
- Phone number
- Home address  
(Street/P.O. Box/City/State/ZIP)

- E-mail address
- Current position (title/company/address/phone)
- Personal news (wedding/births/further educational pursuits/etc.)



## *Florida Institute of Technology*

Department of Humanities and Communication  
150 West University Blvd.  
Melbourne, FL 32901-6975