The annual Handy festival is drawing large crowds to the many venues where music is being played. At this time of year it is impossible to go anywhere in town and not hear music. The festival is also a reminder that we are less than a month away from the start of another academic year. Freshmen have been coming to campus all summer to participate in SOAR and begin their matriculation. It is something to ponder what it feels like to be 18 at this moment in history. I hope that most of these college freshmen will feel a sense of urgency to do well in their studies so that they can become a part of the positive change that we need in our country.

Many of you know by now that our Board of Trustees voted in June to take the University to the Division I level in athletic competition provided that we can meet the new requirements for Division I membership. Another is that we raise through gifts and pledges commitments of $3 million over the five year period beginning in June, 2012. The third is that we have an indication of support for this undertaking from the Shoals community through its government, business, and civic leadership. The Board also adopted measures to insulate the university budget from increased athletic expenditures, and to cap a phased-in student fee at $8 per enrolled hour. Competition at the D-I level has been a topic of conversation in our community for two decades. The Board has adopted an approach to this question that gives the community the opportunity over the next nine months to come forward and support this transition. We are conducting a wide-ranging series of meetings to provide details and answer questions. I encourage everyone to attend one of these. You may contact Dr. Alan Medders (Vice President for Advancement, amedders@una.edu) or Mr. Mark Lindor (Director of Athletics, mlindor@una.edu) for information or to arrange a meeting for your group.

Sometimes we measure success by the things we can see, like a new building. More often, though, success happens one student at a time as we provide more and better educational opportunities. Allowing our students the chance to study abroad has been a long standing ambition of mine, and certainly one for UNA. This year about 100 UNA students visited eight foreign countries as part of their academic programs, each under the careful guidance of one or more faculty members. Cayla Buttram, one of 26 UNA students who spent the month of June in China, wrote these words as she summarized her trip:

"Ultimately, as Mark Twain once said, "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness." What better way to be globally prepared than to find out just what is beyond our borders? We have not only broadened our minds about China and America through our travel, but we have also been given the distinction of study abroad students as we further our own careers and hope to make a positive impact on our world. But, we walk away from the experience with more than just that distinction; we have, tucked away in our minds, a deeper understanding of a country that influences our daily lives in the U.S. now and will increasingly do so in the future. Cayla will never be quite the same person. That's what education does, and that is what we all want for every student. We need to value that one by one, and it’s all but invisible.

I hope you all had a great summer and that we will see you at homecoming September 23-24.

All my best,
Bill Cale
The decision to move forward with Division I plans was made following several months of discussion, careful research, and planning to ensure the financial feasibility of such a transition. In addition to seeking an invitation from an NCAA Division I conference, UNA will have to pay a $1.42 million application fee to the NCAA for a move to Division I.

UNA plans for a six-year transition period to Division I, beginning with Division II universities within a 3.5-hour radius, as opposed to 21 Division I universities.

**PLAYING OUR PEERS**

Pierce said a leading factor in the Board’s decision was to better align UNA with its peer institutions. “The public,” he said, “generally perceives a university as being similar to the universities it keeps company with on the athletic fields and the athletic departments of the universities they play.”

Changes to the NCAA rules would be a major part of the transition cost, Lindner said, and UNA would have to pay a $4.8 million annual fee to the NCAA. The $4.8 million fee would help offset cuts to state funding.

The discussions and plans leading to today’s board decision for a move to Division I have been fueled by the changing landscape of Division II, especially in the Southeast.

**COMMUNITY**

Another leading decision, according to Pierce, was the economic benefits a Division I university will bring to the community. “According to a 2008 study by the Center of Public Policy and Economic Research (COPPER), UNA employee and student spending accounted for a $161 million annual impact on the Lauderdale and Colbert county economies. An additional economic impact of $17.6 million is expected if UNA experiences the average 11 percent enrollment growth experienced by other universities during their transitions from Division II to Division I. Eleven percent growth would also add $4.8 million to UNAs annual budget to help offset cuts to state funding.”

UNA’s growth thus far has been phenomenal — for the university and for the Shoals community. Each of us in the Shoals community is benefiting from what has happened on this campus.” Pierce said. “If this university can grow in similar ways over the next six years, just imagine where we’ll be.”

**BENCHMARK GOALS FOR A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION**

- NCAA Requirements: Fulfill all requirements of the NCAA for membership in Division I.
- Cap Spending: Cap the university’s total operational expenditures in athletics to an amount not to exceed 4 percent of the total University Education and General (E&G) budget.
- Financial Pledges: Secure $500,000 in new annual financial pledges, to total at least $3 million by 2017.
- Phased-in Student Fee: Develop a phased plan for student fee increases not to exceed a maximum of $8 per enrolled hour.
- Community Involvement: Engage the support of the Shoals community through its government, business and civic leadership.

**HOW YOU CAN STAY INFORMED AND GET INVOLVED**

- Support the DI transition as a Circle of Champions member by donating $6,000 or more.
- Check out our Web site at una.edu/division1.
- “Like” our Division I Facebook page at facebook.com/unadivision1.
- Buy season tickets. – Call 256-765-LION
- Join the Sportsman’s Club. – Call 256-765-4185
- Check out and support our sponsors at www.roarlions.com.
Four First Year Resident Educators have been appointed to the building to help orient students to college life. To qualify, a FYRE must be an upper class resident with a good GPA, and must also be involved in several activities on campus.

The dorm towers housed a total of 740 students, with men in Rivers Hall and women in Rice Hall. Construction of new housing facilities was a priority for the university both because of large increases in enrollment and because there was already a housing shortage for unmarried students.

The only major renovation period the two dorms have undergone since opening was in 1989, when the light fixtures and tiles were replaced in the lobbies and hallways.

“This is the best of both worlds,” Mitchell said. “They’ll be able to see both departments at a moment’s notice.”

By Jason Lankford (‘11), Student intern

**THE CIRCLE CONTINUES**

Circle K International, a branch of the Kiwanis family, is the largest collegiate service organization in the world. Circle K International (CKI) at the University of North Alabama has plans and goals including international service partners: Better World Books, Students Team Up to Fight Hunger (STUFH), UNICEF, and March of Dimes.

This year CKI worked with STUFH to have campus organizations participate in a campus “Food Fight.” These organizations will compete in three divisions: fraternity, sorority, and non-Greeks, with each group competing to collect the most canned food items. The winner in each division will earn two Lion Cup points for helping with a community service project. The collected canned food items will be donated to local food banks including the Salvation Army.

CKI also works with the ESMNuHale project. UNICEF has partnered with the Kiwanis to raise a minimum of $110 million by 2015 for the ESMNuHale project, which was started to cure Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus. The Alabama District of Circle K International works with UNICEF to raise $50,000 over the next five years for Jean Dean: Reading is Fundamental (RF). The mission is to put quality, age-appropriate books into the hands and homes of at-risk children before they start kindergarten. Jean Dean RF is a literacy program supported by the Alabama District of Kiwanis International. The District’s goal was set as an amount of recent funding cuts from the federal government to nonprofit organizations. CKI also planning a dance in October (“One Spark, One Night,”) with all proceeds from ticket sales and t-shirts going to benefit Jean Dean RF.

By Myk Watford (‘11), Paul Hebron, Constance Cooper, and Charlton James

University of North Alabama Summer Theatre Program 2011

The cast and crew included several theatre industry professionals, such as actor/director Myk Watford, known for his roles in “No Country for Old Men,” “Spiderman,” “CSI: Miami” and “Law & Order,” among other movies and television programs.

Other cast members included Paul Hebron, a veteran of the Alabama Shakespeare Festival; Constance Cooper, from the film “Friday Night Lights;” Brian Sloan, independent film and OFF-Broadway veteran; and Charlton James, stage and screen actor and UNA faculty member.

Myk Watford Paul Hebron Constance Cooper Charlton James

The cast and crew included several theatre industry professionals, such as actor/director Myk Watford, known for his roles in “No Country for Old Men,” “Spiderman,” “CSI: Miami” and “Law & Order,” among other movies and television programs.

Theatre, Tennessee Williams’ “A Streetcar Named Desire” has already been selected as next year’s production.
During the May inter-session in 2011, faculty at the Department of Geography created the first ever opportunity for UNA students to experience Africa. Directed by Dr. Francis Koti and Dr. Greg Gaston, fifteen UNA students travelled to Tanzania where they learned about the East African human and physical environment through travel and personal experiences.

The two-week Geography study abroad program was based in three regions of Tanzania – Arusha, Dar es Salaam, and the Island of Zanzibar. While Dr. Koti offered "Geography of Africa" course with a focus on Tanzania, Dr. Gaston offered "East African Landforms and Landscapes." Notable experiences in the Arusha area included a visit to Ol’Donyo Lengai, the site of the earliest known hominid discovered by Mary and Louis Leakey, which has come to be known as the cradle of mankind. The Ngorongoro crater and escarpment, Engare Sero River Gorge, and the Ol’donyo Lengai volcanic dome were also significant study sites in this region.

After a week in Arusha area, the group traveled 400 miles by road to Dar es Salaam, the commercial capital of Tanzania on the east coast. Based at the University of Dar es Salaam’s Department of Geography, the group visited various sites where they learned about many urban, historical and cultural aspects of the east African coast. The two days spent in the Island of Zanzibar were a true adventure into the cultural history of the island.

The group returned to the U.S. on June 1, after an adventure into a territory previously uncharted by UNA study abroad programs. Based on their trip, “In just two weeks, I learned more about Geography and culture from personal experiences than I ever would have in a classroom. I absolutely enjoyed every moment, no matter how challenging, on this trip more than any other expedition I have taken,” Dr. Koti and Dr. Gaston are already planning for another trip to Tanzania during the May inter-session in 2012. Details will be announced early in the fall 2011.

By Francis Koti

**AN EPIC ADVENTURE**

For math and physics major Daniel Johnson, the love of astronomy has governed his life for many years. This summer, he came one step closer to achieving his dreams after being awarded a national grant to conduct research in Cerro Tololo, Chile.

Johnson submitted a research proposal in October 2010 to the Sigma Xi Scientific Research Society. The society, which includes 60,000 scientists from more than 100 countries around the world, awarded him a $2,800 grant to study star clusters in Chile for 10 days in July with Dr. Mel Blake of the UNA Department of Physics and Earth Science.

The society awards grants to less than 20 percent of applicants, and the fact that Johnson is an undergraduate made his award even more rare. Blake said that, in order to conduct their research, they also had to apply to the National Optical Astronomy Observatory in use the 3.25-foot telescope in Chile.

Johnson said that “any research experience you have when you’re applying to graduate school helps, but the fact that I’ve gotten this national grant will hopefully make me competitive for future jobs.”

During their research trip, Johnson and Blake studied two star clusters to determine which had more variable stars and to see if there is any correlation between the populations of large blue and variable stars.

“Daniel has the right skills to do this research, they also had to apply to the National Optical Astronomy Observatory in use the 3.25-foot telescope in Chile. Johnson said that “any research experience you have when you’re applying to graduate school helps, but the fact that I’ve gotten this national grant will hopefully make me competitive for future jobs.”

During their research trip, Johnson and Blake studied two star clusters to determine which had more variable stars and to see if there is any correlation between the populations of large blue and variable stars.

“The key thing to me is that this is a grant that was written by Daniel, and it’s a national competition with grants that students from all over the United States were competing for,” Blake said. “This certainly says something about him in that he went for it. There were students from big schools applying for that money, and for him to beat out the competition like that is pretty good.”
It’s easy to know when something is close to the heart of Harvey Robbins, because he lives by the principle of letting actions speak louder than words. That’s why his fingerprints are all over his hometown of Tuscumbia.

When he decided the city should have one of the best parks in the region, he donated the land and resources to build it. When he envisioned a restored and revitalized downtown Tuscumbia, he again reached into his pockets and made it happen. When he started reminiscing about the old soda shop he used to frequent in high school, he bought up the old street corner shop and rebuilt his favorite landmark, The Palace.

That’s where Harvey and his wife, Joyce Ann, were one hot afternoon this past July when they met five recent graduates of their alma mater, Deshler High School. The students were among the first recipients of Harvey’s latest project, the Harvey and Joyce Ann Robbins Endowed Scholarship. The scholarship, which he created through a $1 million gift to UNA this year, is to provide a UNA education for students graduating from Deshler.

“IT does take you back,” Harvey said of seeing The Palace full of teenagers about the age he was.
when it was his regular hangout. The only difference was that these were kids who had grown up playing at a park he had built and eating ice cream at a soda shop he had restored. Now they were going to college through a scholarship he had funded. 

He served them all ice cream and reminisced. “I spent a lot of time here with my high school friends and a lot of time here with my wife,” he said. Harvey and Joyce Anne were married in 1952, the year after they graduated from Deshler. Harvey would later enroll at UNA and then go on to a career in real estate, which he sold in the mid 1990s. In the years since, he has owned and operated Robbins Property Development Inc., which has given him the leverage for many of his charitable projects for Tuscumbia and surrounding areas.

“I get a kick out of helping,” he said, “but I also get a kick out of giving back to the community in whatever way I can. I believe this scholarship donation will give more in the long term than anything else I could have done with the money.”

Harvey said he also loves the idea that the new Robbins scholarship is “ongoing – it never quits, and that makes me feel good.”

“Joshua M. Smith

Being chosen as a recipient of the Robbins Scholarship is truly an honor and a blessing. Receiving this scholarship has helped reduce the burden of cost on my family. It has allowed me to pursue my dream of attending Eastern University. I am so grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Robbins for their generosity. Thank you again for giving such an opportunity! I love you.”

I was very grateful to receive this scholarship, and it means a great deal to me. This award has helped take the pressure off of trying to pay for college and everyday. I hope to be able to return the favor to Mr. and Mrs. Robbins in the future. Thank you for your generosity.

Cassie Hudson

This scholarship is more than a gift. It has given me a head start to further my education. I had no idea where my life was headed. I had applied to UNA before but I was still on the fence about attending. When my counselor told me about the Robbins scholarship, everything changed. This gave me the motivation and purpose.

Brandon Watkins

An endowed scholarship at UNA qualifies for the Lion Match Program when it reaches $25,000 or more in total contributions. For more information on the Lion Match Program, contact Melissa Pettus, endowed scholarships coordinator, at 256-765-4757 or rmpettus@una.edu.

Joshua M. Smith  Cassie Hudson  Brandon Watkins  Taylor Williamson  David Sides

To me this scholarship means an opportunity to go to school and learn about something that interests me. I plan to use the knowledge that I learned at UNA in my future.

David Sides

With the help of this scholarship, my goal of obtaining a college education will be much simpler to accomplish. I could never express the amount of gratitude I have for Mr. Robbins and the Robbins family. With the help of this scholarship, Mr. Robbins may have directly helped and the future of a cancer survivor or the future President of the United States or a future military leader through college. I know that this scholarship will not only have an impact on my life but on the lives of those I come in contact with after college. Thank you so much for this amazing blessing. I look forward to what God has in store for me in the future. Once again thank you, Mr. Robbins.

This blessing has made a world of difference in my life.
“Building the Future” Reunion
ATTENTION KILBY SCHOOL ALUMNI AND FRIENDS:

Please join us for our “Building the Future” Reunion Weekend! The reunion festivities will be held in conjunction with UNA’s Homecoming. You and your family are invited to return to campus for the special events that have been planned. While you are here, you will be able to meet the current generation of Cubs who are thriving at Kilby.

Don’t miss this opportunity to see the changes at Kilby and UNA, visit with old friends and to share your memorable experience at Kilby with your family!

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23
5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. - Kids’ Movie Night
The Kilby teachers will watch your children while you enjoy a night out. The kids will watch a movie and have popcorn and drinks. Just drop off your kids at the Kilby gymnasium. You may also preview the items for Saturday’s silent auction.

9:00 p.m. - UNA Pep Rally
Feel free to park your car in the Kilby parking lot and walk over to the UNA practice field for the pep rally. This is an event your whole family will enjoy. Don’t forget to wear your Purple and Gold to show your LION PRIDE!

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24
10:00 a.m. - UNA Homecoming Parade
Join us in the Kilby parking lot at 10:00 a.m. to place the finishing touches on the Kilby School Alumni float. Visit with old friends and prepare to be a part of the UNA Homecoming Parade.

11:00 a.m. - UNA Homecoming Parade
If you are unable to join us in the parade, then go downtown to watch the parade.

12:00 noon - 2:30 p.m. - Kilby Reunion Picnic
RSVP by September 15 at http://alumni.una.edu/kilbyalumni
The cost will be $5.00 per person ($7.00 day of the event). There will be a tour of the school, live entertainment, silent auction, kids’ fun zone and lunch will be served.

3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. - Tailgating on Spirit Hill
Spirit Hill is located just outside of Braly Stadium. Come out and get fired up to support your UNA Lions! Don’t miss the Lion Walk at 4:00 p.m. UNA fans gather on the street to cheer as the UNA Lions Football Team walks into the stadium. (Kids really LOVE this event!)

6:00 p.m. - UNA Lions vs. Harding Bison
Please reserve your tickets by September 15 at http://alumni.una.edu/kilbyalumni

FROM ZERO TO INFINITY
John and Rosie Cole Create a Minority Scholarship Through the Investment of Land

Rosie Cole said she and her husband, John, a UNA Trustee, “started out with zero.” John said it was “minus zero.” Even so, they made it a priority to send their four children to college.

“I always wanted my children to have an education,” Rosie said, “and we worked hard for that. There were some things we could have enjoyed ourselves, but we put it back for those four kids, and we were blessed that we were able to send all four of them college.”

Now that all four of the Coles’ children are through college and leading successful lives, the Coles have turned their attention to other future college graduates. This summer they created the John and Rosie Cole Endowed Scholarship for minority students. The scholarship is funded through a gift of land valued at $60,000.

John, retired from Ford Motor Company, manages several rental, commercial, and residential properties. He also owns and operates Bunyan’s Bar-B-Que in Florence and Sheffield.

When asked if a factor in making their gift was the idea that an endowed scholarship is lasting – an investment that keeps giving to students every year – he said yes, but not the leading factor.

“The leading factor,” he said, “was that I could take what I had and help somebody. You can have education and know-how, but if you haven’t helped somebody in this world, what have you done?”

The Lion Match Program
The average endowed scholarship awards about 5 percent of the fund’s assets. For the Coles, who created a scholarship of $60,000, that means $3,000 in scholarship awards to students each year. But UNA, through the Lion Match Program, matches the annual awards to students for every endowed scholarship that has received $25,000 or more in financial contributions.

So, what would have been a $3,000 award from the Cole’s scholarship is now a $6,000 annual award.

For More Information
Misty Pattus
Coordinator of Endowed Scholarships
256-765-4757
mpattus@una.edu

For More Information – Caring for the Pride
University of North Alabama
Caring for the Pride
UNA Tornado Relief Effort
As Clean-up ends Healing begins
Make your contribution and receive a t-shirt!
Your contribution to the Caring For The Pride Fund will provide much-needed support for our current & future students impacted by the April 27, 2011 tornadoes as scholarships assistance, book scholarships, room & board aid & supplies. Receive a complimentary t-shirt (S-XL) with any $25 minimum donation.

Make check payable to UNA Foundation – Caring for the Pride
Mail Donation to: UNA Foundation, c/o UNA, P.O. Box 1789, Florence, AL 35432
For more information or to donate with credit or debit card visit: http://www.una.edu/alumni/
It was Honors Day, near the end of the Spring 1964 semester, and was attending as part of the school choir. As awards were being handed out, it turned out that Gunn was not only there to sing. When it was announced that he was the top physics student and recipient of the Physics Achievement Award, he was in a state of shock.

Applause began, slowly at first, gaining momentum, spreading, until finally the whole auditorium seemed to erupt in an ovation that lasted for two to three minutes, bringing tears to the eyes of Florence State College’s first African-American student.

This show of acceptance and support from his fellow students had come after months of cold shoulders, suspicion and silence, integrated schools still being a social taboo in much of the state.

“For me it was a transitional moment,” Gunn said. “I realized then that the reason why the other students weren’t talking to me was that they were worried about what others might think.”

During the remainder of Gunn’s time at FSC, those barriers evaporated and he ceased to be lonely, finding acceptance and a positive social climate in which to further pursue his academic goals.

But things hadn’t started off so smoothly. When the Tuscaloosa native first walked into the registrar’s office at FSC in the summer of 1963, hoping to transfer from Tennessee State, he didn’t anticipate being rejected.

The University of Alabama had already been integrated, and Gunn thought the doors would be wide open from that point forward. He was escorted to President Norton’s office and told that he could not be admitted without obtaining a court order.

Gunn said he never considered himself to be a revolutionary, but under the circumstances he felt he had to ask “Why?” Though he had confronted social barriers his whole life he couldn’t think of a rational reason why he would be prevented from attending.

“That was the only way we knew,” Gunn said. “We knew there were barriers, and for the most part we respected them until they became oppressive.”

Gunn said the court’s decision was handed down in less than 30 minutes. The school’s officials complied with the order, and he registered for classes without incident.

“They didn’t seem to be resisting it,” Gunn said. “They knew it was going to happen at some point.”

Due to the turmoil that had erupted when the University of Alabama was integrated, Gunn was cautious; having received threatening phone calls and heard rumors that some people...
his lab coat to attend graduate school at the University of Chicago's school of finance.

"Chemistry labs are not for the gregarious," Gunn said. "I decided I wanted to see what the marketing side was like. When you study science you learn to be analytical, and you use those skills everywhere."

Coming from a small town like Tuscumbia and a small school like FSC Gunn was apprehensive at first about how he would compare to his fellow students, many of whom were graduates of Harvard, MIT and Wharton.

His self-consciousness soon faded when he ended up conducting calculus tutorials attended by those same students, many of whom were engineers. After hearing success stories from other high achievers from FSC Gunn began to believe that he had been part of something special, that there was 'something in the water' back home.

After obtaining his master's degree in 1971 Gunn worked at Chase Manhattan Bank and PepsiCo, Inc. In 1982 he was recruited into the world of politics when President Reagan's chief financial officer asked Gunn if he would be interested in coming to the White House.

"I told him I would like to tour the White House, but had no interest in working there," Gunn said. "But at the end of the day he walked me into the Oval Office and introduced me to the President. The leader of the free world reached across the desk and said 'Welcome aboard.' I stammered for a minute, then said 'Thank you, sir.'"

Gunn said he would stay on as the President's advisor on international trade for two years. He ended up staying for exactly two years and one day, utilizing his analytical skills and inquisitive nature to take on the kind of tasks he had never envisioned having to confront.

"It was one of the most interesting jobs I ever had," Gunn said. "I learned an awful lot about politics I didn't want to learn, how government works and how it doesn't."

Gunn had been on the job for 10 days when Braniff International Airways filed for bankruptcy. He got a call from the West Wing saying that President Reagan would soon have to give a press conference, and any preparation the President had regarding aviation policy would have to come from Gunn.

Gunn had already put in 12 hours of work that day, but ended up staying for a total of 24 hours, scrambling to learn everything he possibly could about the aviation industry in that brief time span.

"If you cause the President to embarrass himself you can't raise your head anymore," Gunn said. "You've got to be a quick learner and always take up subjects you don't know much about."

Gunn breathed a sigh of relief after the press conference was over, and reached for a cigarette. Though he was ordinarily a frequent smoker, he had not smoked at all during the previous 24 hours.

"I was under such pressure to do that right that I forgot to smoke," Gunn said. "I took it, put it back in the pack and I haven't had a cigarette since."

After leaving his post at the White House Gunn worked in the mergers and acquisitions department of Met Life, and then founded his own software company, Gunn Solutions.

His job is mostly conducted at a distance, and Gunn said part of him desires to leave his home in Stamford, Conn., but he and his wife have grandchildren in New York they couldn't bear to leave. Gunn still considers North Alabama to be his true home.
A musical “blind date” was all it took to radically change John Paul White’s musical career. In 2008, White received a call to participate in a writer’s camp in Nashville, a gathering of approximately 20 songwriters in an effort to pen several songs for a popular country band. It was at that writer’s camp that White met Joy Williams.

“The writers drew straws, and Joy and I ended up in a room together,” White said. “It was evident from the beginning that there was something strange in the air; I knew where she was going melodically and vice versa. It was as if we had been singing together all our lives.”

Following that chance encounter, White and Williams got together for another songwriting session and a recording session before deciding to take their collaboration further than simply writing songs together for other people. And just like that, the Civil Wars were born.

In the short time they’ve been together, the Civil Wars have enjoyed the kind of success most musicians only dream of. Their second public performance, at Eddie’s Attic in Decatur, Georgia, was recorded and then released as a free download. That recording was downloaded by over 170,000 people.

Following the success of their free live recording, the Civil Wars caught the attention of pop star Taylor Swift, who paid them a compliment from her Twitter account and included one of their songs in her official iTunes playlist. They finally released their first full-length studio recording, *Barton Hollow*, to much critical acclaim and to even more commercial success than even they expected. *Barton Hollow* debuted at #12 on the Billboard 200 and #1 on the iTunes album chart. As if this were not enough, the duo sold out almost every date on their spring tour, and the demand for tickets was so great in some markets that extra shows had to be added.

The group continues to tour and continues to sell out shows, and will be spending the month of September touring in the United Kingdom with British singer Adele. Each of those dates sold out several months in advance.

Despite all the success, John Paul White ’02 still remembers his roots. White was born in the Shoals, grew up in Loretto, Tennessee, and then returned to the Shoals after high school to attend UNA, where he earned a degree in Entertainment Industry Management.

“I’m very proud of the musical heritage of the Shoals, and believe it shouldn’t ever be forgotten, but my concerns are more with the present and future of the community,” White said. “It is inspiring to walk the same streets of those who have been there and done that, and to know that it can be done from our little town. But outside of that, we have to make our own hay, and not expect the community to lift us up to the heights we want to reach.”

It’s safe to say that John Paul White is doing his part to further the musical legacy of the Shoals.
From a very young age, Rusty Sherrill ’09 knew he wanted to work in the music industry. “I’ve always wanted to do this,” Sherrill said. “I used to listen to the Bob Kingsley Country Top 40 countdown every Sunday and I kept a notebook for where the songs were on the chart.” Since graduating from the University of North Alabama with a degree in Entertainment Industry Management and Public Communications, Sherrill has been able to fulfill his dream of working in music. Sherrill serves as the Arista Nashville National Promotions Coordinator, handling such artists as Brad Paisley, Carrie Underwood, Ronnie Dunn, Kix Brooks, Jerrod Niemann, Adam Brand, and Brent Anderson, and working with these artists has proved to be every bit as rewarding as he envisioned as a child.

Now Sherrill’s love for the charts is more than just a hobby. Instead of just keeping up with where songs fall on the charts from week to week, Sherrill plays an active role in influencing the placement of those songs by promoting the songs his artists have out to radio stations across the country.

“The most rewarding aspect of my job is seeing a song that the team has worked on go to No. 1,” Sherrill said.

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The Man Behind the Sound

Chris Bethea ’07 discovered his calling early.

“In high school I was playing in bands and was always interested in the PA system and set up,” Bethea said. “That triggered my interest in the technical side of music and I realized that it was something I wanted to pursue.”

So he traded in his spot playing guitar on stage for a career behind a mixing console.

Shortly after graduating from UNA with a Bachelor of Science in Commercial Music, Bethea was hired by songwriter Gary Baker to serve as the House Engineer at his studio, Noiseblock.

While working at Noiseblock, Bethea has had the opportunity to work with such prominent artists as Richie McDonald, Collin Raye, Ethan Botnick, LAVive (winner of Popstars, a German television program similar to American Idol), Saving Jane, and most recently, a band he has followed and admired for years: Sleeping At Last.

Sleeping At Last hired Bethea to mix the May installation of their year-long project known as Yearbook, which features a new, 3-song EP released digitally every month.

“I love their writing and sense of melody,” Bethea said. “The Yearbook project is a very cool idea. I can’t imagine the stress they go through every month!”

Bethea plans to continue to work on the production end of the industry, but hopes to focus more on mixing recordings.

“What I love about the technical side of music is that I get to work with a really good band on a really good song,” Bethea said. “That doesn’t happen all the time but when it does it’s a great feeling.”

While Bethea’s focus might have shifted from playing music to its technical side, he still has an appreciation for a good song.

“The most rewarding aspect of my job is being able to work with a really good band on a really good song,” Bethea said. “That doesn’t happen all the time but when it does it’s a great feeling.”

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message from the Alumni President

As I write to you and reflect on the last year, I am humbled by the strength of our University. April 27, 2011, is a day that forever changed the lives of our University family. So many of our current and former students, faculty, and staff were affected by the devastating tornadoes that touched down and destroyed the Brave. We all worked hard to build. At that moment our UNA family made the choice to not stand idly by and let others deal with the situation. Instead, we mobilized. From our current students, to our staff, to our alumni, we answered the call and lent our much-needed help in so many of that moment of despair. I could not be prouder to call myself a member of our Pride. On behalf of all alumni, I accept my sincere thanks to all who stepped out of their comfort zone and were there when you were needed most.

Even as we continue to recover from the devastating storms there is still much to be done. Please continue to pray for rebuilding in those areas destroyed and healing for those directly and indirectly affected. Like the growth occurring on our campus, I am sure that those whose lives were touched will grow stronger through these events.

I am doubly proud to also inform you that your efforts over the last year have brought our Alumni Association to new heights. Over the last year we have increased Alumni giving from 2% to 8%. Your investment means that more students will have more opportunities to “Make History” at UNA. Please continue to encourage your friends, families, and associates to make a commitment to invest in a young person’s future.

As I have said all year, “It’s not the quantity, but the quality of your gift that counts.” Every dollar invested helps our Office of Alumni Relations and University Foundation get our story out and help grow our University.

For me, this letter to you is bittersweet. Although it marks the end of my tenure as your Alumni Association President, I know that the foundation has been laid to insure future growth and prosperity. Over the last year the face of our Alumni Association has changed. Thanks to a partnership with our University Foundation we have established a stable source of funds based funding for our Clubs. Additionally, we have changed our local groups from “Chapters” to “Clubs.” In speaking with local groups we were amazed at how many people wanted to be involved who did not graduate from UNA, but simply love the welcoming environment our local groups create. We could not be prouder to have each and every one of those individuals as part of the UNA Family and let me be the first to welcome each of those new members to our Pride!

None of these accomplishments could have been made without the support of our board, volunteers, and Office of Alumni Relations staff. Let me begin by thanking our Alumni Board for their tireless work over the last year. I would put our board up against those at any university in the country and am sure that they would rise to the top.

I would also like to thank all of the volunteers who lead groups at the club level. It has been said that working with volunteers is difficult; however, the club leadership in our network is second to none. Thank you all for your dedication. Each of you has the heart of a servant and your Alumni thank you.

Lastly, let me thank the University staff. I will be the first to tell you that the Office of Alumni Relations does the work of 20 people. They have a flair for UNA that I only wish I had the energy to emulate and they are true examples of what we as alumni should strive for. Each of your efforts today made our University stronger.

As we enter into a new year for our association, the stakes could not be higher. With new academic facilities being built, new academic programs being melded, and new opportunities on the horizon for our athletic programs, we as alumni must be willing to step up to the plate. No matter what your passions are, UNA has a field for you. Please continue to be engaged in the happenings at the University and stand ready to support it when your time comes.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you all for the trust you placed in me over this past year. It is an experience I will cherish for a lifetime.

ROAR LIONS!

Brad Holmes ’02, President, UNA Alumni Association

To Beckon Artists’ Dreams Into Existence

Kat Davis ’99 knew she wanted to work in the music industry long before she arrived on the campus of UNA. “For Christmas the year I turned 15, the present I asked my parents for was a subscription to Billboard Magazine. And they got it for me,” Davis says. “I was and still am a total music business nerd.”

Davis graduated from the University of North Alabama with a joint degree in Music Business and Public Relations, and secured a job with Front ForeFront Records in their national promotions department. From there, Kat moved into a couple of different jobs with the same parent company before beginning to work with Greg Hill Management. It was here that Davis first gained experience in her current field: artist management.

Shortly after Greg Hill Management was acquired by Red Light Management, Davis decided to found her own artist management firm, The Brown Book Agency. In only three years, The Brown Book Agency has grown from a one-employee company managing two clients to a full-fledged force within the music industry. Davis now manages four artists, two of whom are nominated for Gospel Music Awards this year. Brown Book has also recently launched a touring division, and now employs four people.


Recently, in the midst of managing a growing business, Davis has also found time to author a book. Based on daily devotionals, Davis is currently publishing a devotional book featuring a Scripture passage and a brief meditation on it. To purchase a copy of her book, or to subscribe to her daily e-mail, visit http://www.thebrownverse.com

Kat Davis ’99 said, “I have always loved music. From the bottom of my heart, thank you all for the trust you placed in me over this past year. It is an experience I will cherish for a lifetime.”
About 85 golfers convened at the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail at The Shoals the morning of Aug. 8 for a round of golf. The event, the UNA Sportsman’s Club Celebrity Golf Classic, was to support UNA athletics. The tournament is in its second year. To be a part of next year’s Celebrity Golf Classic, contact the Office of University Advancement at 256-765-5083.

James Ingram ('78), Bill Cale, Barry Morris

Mike Keehn & Dennis Wingo

Melody Stewart ('65), Krystal Hand Smith ('96) and Chris Smith

Laura ('96) & William Smith ('96)

Clint Garrett, Chris Hammond, Mike McCrary ('90) & Carie McCrary, Andy Davis

Mike McCrary ('90) & Carie McCrary

Greg DeWalt ('81)

Danny Simpson

Jake Pollard & Terry Bagwell ('83)

Al Ford, Whitney Ford ('92) & Barry Morris

Philip Bridgman ('96)

Chris Hammond

Jeff Frederick ('92) & Steve Lee ('86)

Johnny Simpson ('90)

Greg DeWalt ('81) & Bill Cale

Steve Lee ('86)

Robert Steele ('78) & Bill Cale

Philip Bridgman ('96)

Chris Hammond

Jeff Frederick ('92)

Carl Bailey ('70), Whitney Ford ('92), Jim Belew ('70)

Bruce Hodges

James Ingram ('78), Bill Cale, Barry Morris

Jeff Bowden & Ronald Kennedy

MarvinWhisenant ('63), Chuck Lindley

Billy Don Anderson ('92)

Fred Formichella & Alan Kincaid

Steve Pierce ('75)

Johnny Simpson ('90)

Kirby Atten

Barry Cines

Stewart Moore

Jimmie Oliver & David Bronner
“The world will have been enhanced because you were here,” Dr. Randy Cross ‘73 said, addressing graduates at the Spring 2011 Commencement Ceremony. “You will be better neighbors, coworkers and citizens because of all that you have studied. On top of that, the truths contained in the poetry you have read should keep you from robbing convenience stores. Now isn’t that a nice fringe benefit?”

Cross, an English professor at Calhoun Community College and a UNA alumnus, believes it’s very important to maintain a sense of humor in life, and his own sense of humor recently landed him a prominent role on last month’s History Channel special, “You Don’t Know Dixie,” a program that explored all things Southern, from deep-fried comfort food, to Alabama football, religion and NASCAR.

But when Cross was unexpectedly invited via e-mail to be a part of the program, he asked, “Why would the bouncing ball stop on me?”

“I think it’s interesting that you can be sitting in an office, and then, like a message in a bottle you get a message from a TV show in New York and you don’t even know why,” he said.

Producers from the History Channel found Cross’s online biography, which led them to his YouTube channel, where he had posted three videos of himself telling humorous stories. And the rest was, well, history.

Cross earned his bachelor’s degree from UNA and a master’s degree in 1976. He later earned a Ph.D. from the University of Mississippi. He has taught at Calhoun Community College since 1986. Cross said going to graduate school was one of the best decisions he ever made, but his experiences at UNA and the influence of his instructors are what inspired him to go into the education field.

“They instilled in me a respect for learning,” Cross said. “It was so obvious that they loved what they were doing, and they were able to transfer that to some of us. It made me realize that I wanted to be a teacher. The seeds were planted back at UNA.”

Cross’s love of English and his teaching aspirations blossomed after a trial period as a business major, a course of study he said he originally chose because a friend told him that’s what boys majored in.

“It’s so bizarre to me today,” Cross said. “[Business was] so uninteresting. After two semesters of classes I learned enough to know that wasn’t for me.”

Cross wanted to be a high school teacher. His goal was to teach in the Florence City Schools system, so when he landed a position at Forest Hills School straight out of college he thought he had his foot in the door. But after one year he decided to go back to school.

The Spring commencement was not Cross’s first time speaking at UNA. He had given a convocation address to incoming freshman four years earlier. “I was a little nervous,” he said. “But it would be great if Cross was able to speak to many of the same students he had addressed when they were freshman.”

Cross said if anyone had told him in 1973 that he would be returning as the commencement speaker he would have “laughed like a hyena on nitrous oxide.”

“I think it’s so important to maintain a sense of humor in life, and that’s why I keep the funnies in my veins,” he said.

Cross co-edited Laughing Stock, an autobiography of UNA alumnus and Pulitzer Prize-winning author T.S. Stribling 1903. He came upon the opportunity after a UNA instructor introduced him to a relative of Stribling who lived in Clifton, Tenn. During one visit Ms. Stribling presented Cross and a friend with a box full of manuscripts and asked the two to edit the author’s autobiography and find a publisher.

Cross currently lives in Decatur with his wife Kimberly, who shares his adventurous spirit, but hers manifests itself in a penchant for bungee-jumping, an activity she insists everyone needs to try at least once.

“I’ve done that,” Cross said. “And that was at birth.”

“HIS SENSE OF HUMOR LANDS DR. RANDY CROSS ’73 ON THE NATIONAL STAGE

By Jason Lankford (‘11), Student intern

Cross recently landed a role on the History Channel special, “You Don’t Know Dixie.”

Cross was co-editor of Laughing Stock, an autobiography of UNA alumnus and Pulitzer Prize winner T.S. Stribling.

Brazil and Lisbon, Portugal, where he taught English classes to college seniors. He said his experiences illustrate Mark Twain’s adage, “Travel is fatal to prejudice.” He said he learned a lot about the local cultures and learned to speak a fair amount of the Portuguese language.

“When I arrived in Rio I didn’t speak a word of Portuguese,” he said. “I felt fairly proficient by the time I moved to Lisbon, but knowing Portuguese in Rio and Portuguese in Lisbon is like knowing English in Moulton and English in London.”

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Cross made two year-long sojourns as a Fulbright Scholar in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil and Lisbon, Portugal, where he taught English classes to college seniors. He said his experiences illustrate Mark Twain’s adage, “Travel is fatal to prejudice.” He said he learned a lot about the local cultures and learned to speak a fair amount of the Portuguese language.

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Dr. Matt Green is a tenured associate professor in the Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation at the University of North Alabama. He completed his Ph.D. at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa in 1999. That fall, Green joined the faculty of Western Kentucky University, where he served as director of the Human Performance Lab. Highlights of his five years at Western Kentucky included early promotion, receipt of the Award for Outstanding Research Creativity at the College and University level, and recognition as the University Physical Educator of the Year for the state of Kentucky.

While having established roots in Kentucky, Green followed the urge to work with graduate students and accepted the opportunity to return to the University of Alabama. At the University of Alabama, Green entered as associate professor, directed the Human Performance Lab and was granted early tenures. While very happy at Alabama, he accepted a position at UNA in 2008 to move closer to his family and his wife's family. Spring 2011 concluded Green's third year at UNA.

Green's research has involved applied aspects of exercise physiology and human performance, including studies on exercise prescription, thermoregulation, perceived exertion, blood and sweat lactate responses, interval training and ergogenic aids. In the past 12 years, he has authored and co-authored more than 60 research publications in various nationally and internationally recognized peer-reviewed journals. He has been an invited speaker at numerous professional conferences, including the Mid-Atlantic and Central States regional American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) Conference and the Shanghai University of Sport in China. He is also on the editorial board for the ACSM's Health/fitness Journal and has served as a reviewer for numerous scientific journals. Green is certified as a Health/Fitness Specialist and is a Fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine.

Green's approach to research and scholarship has two principle goals: One, to engage students in ongoing projects so they can gain an appreciation for the rigor involved in the scientific process. Second, to make research a component of the professor's job, which should be integrated with teaching rather than viewing the two as mutually exclusive.

Some of his proudest academic accomplishments are the multiple student authorships and co-authorships, as well as students who have moved on to success in graduate school and professionally.

Green firmly believes that excellence in his job is consistent with his Christian beliefs. While research is a major component of his profession, Green's proudest accomplishments in life are marrying his wife, Staci, and becoming a father to his little girl, Summer.

Dr. Linda Lewis is a professor of secondary education and program coordinator for the Alternative A Graduate Program. An Alabama native, she earned a B.S.Ed. in mathematics and general science from Athens College, an M.A.Ed. in general science from the University of North Alabama, and an Ed.S. in educational leadership and Ed.D. in instructional leadership from the University of Alabama. Before joining UNA in 2005, Lewis taught high school mathematics, science and computer courses in Limestone County and undergraduate educational technology and methods courses at Athens State University.

A teacher-educator, Lewis strives to ensure that preservice teachers will enter the professional arena with a repertoire of skills to motivate, educate and inspire the next generation of students. She believes it is essential that future teachers do more than just teach. A major component of this approach is to take instruction outside the traditional classroom, into the community and other sites.

Some of her proudest academic accomplishments include her research on culturally relevant pedagogy, which she has shared at national and international conferences. Lewis is an active member of the National Association for the Education of Young Children and currently serves as president of the Alabama Association for the Education of Young Children and co-chair of the Commission on Professional Development.

Lewis is a teacher and a learner, both by profession and desire. For thirty-three years, she has been a teacher: a teacher of children, adolescents, preservice teachers, and practicing educators. She identifies both traditional and non-traditional educational settings for her own learning, with her most beneficial learning coming from time spent in high school classrooms. Renewal comes from working one-on-one with former students in their classrooms, designing activities, setting up materials, aligning standards, managing technology, and simply working with day-to-day instruction. Lewis eagerly awaits the beginning of the next semester at the University of North Alabama.
Little did Dr. Nick Mauriello know that a college work-study job as a writing center tutor would change his life.

"I was looking for a job to make a few dollars to spend on textbooks, not looking to spend my life mentoring student writers. The more I worked with students, though, the more the teaching bug bit, and it became clear that I would spend my life as a teacher of writing," recalled the UNA associate professor of English.

Three decades later, the skills learned as a peer tutor are still evident in his teaching style.

"The best writing tutorials are collaborative, give-and-take sessions where the student uncovers and questions the critical thinking process," Mauriello said. He added, "Curiosity should lead ... of learners is the starting point in my teaching. How we collaborate with others defines who we are as individuals."

A native of New Jersey, Mauriello came to UNA in 2005 after serving four years as a writing program administrator in Atlanta. He credits his UNA students with restoring his passion for teaching. "Several of our recent graduates have been accepted to top-tier graduate schools, so we see the reward of our work."

The social constructionist framework is also easy to identify in Mauriello's career as a scholar. Since arriving at UNA, he has collaboratively written and edited three books on the subject of social constructivism and writing. A collection of essays is set to be published in 2011, titled "Social Constructivism and Writing: Relationships." This collection also includes a chapter by UNA English department colleague Kelly L. Latchaw.

Mauriello also mentors students in the professional publication process. Two former students have accepted internships with him in manuscript preparation, helping to guide two books to publication. Another current professional writing student, Deborah Bailey, is co-authoring a book chapter with Mauriello. The chapter chronicles how an undergraduate reaction to her New Media Writing course became a starting point for a curriculum reform.

"The credit for this idea belongs to the student," Mauriello said. "She approached me and asked about the theory behind our writing assignments. We created an independent study where she could examine and compare competing ideas, and the book chapter took form. This is a prime example of social constructionist theory and what can happen in the classroom when students get curious."
I was frustrated. The lady behind the counter at the Tianjin campus post office didn’t seem to understand that I needed to mail 10 postcards, and quite honestly, I had tapped out my entire Chinese vocabulary after about 28 words. After a pause, I pointed and nodded and said, “To America. Māi gōu.” Finally, she nodded, too. A few years later, I thanked her (in Chinese) and found myself ready to send my hello’s home. But I learned something even more imperative this past June: if we work hard enough, we can see a glimpse of familiarity even worlds away.

In April 2011, Dr. Chunsheng Zhang, UNA Vice Provost for International Affairs, stood before students and parents at Study Abroad Orientation and said, “Study abroad is what will put students ahead in the 21st century. They must be globally prepared.” At that time, my June study in China felt far away. Now, only after I have returned home, I have finally begun to realize the impact of this life-changing global preparation.

The China Study Abroad Program, largely funded by scholarship donations from various sources, sent 26 students from assorted disciplines and two UNA professors to China for four weeks in order to study International Business and the Geography of China at Tianjin Foreign Studies University. Classes were held at the university campus during the week, and the weekends were scheduled as excursions to other cities and many of China’s famous sites—including but not limited to the Terracotta Warriors near Xi’an, Mt. Tai in Tai’an, Confucius’ hometown of Qufu, Tian’anmen Square, the Forbidden City, and most notably, a section of the Great Wall nearest Beijing. Aside from the class study, our purpose was two-fold: (1) allow UNA students to learn experientially about China and the Chinese way of life while (2) developing relationships and connections with Chinese students and our Chinese UNA alumni. This trip was undoubtedly instrumental in aiding us in the quest to understand many of the subtleties of Chinese life (everything from knowing how to respond to a compliment to understanding how traffic rules do or do not apply). Our everyday experiences in China with varied events and individuals—restaurant dining, post offices, other students, maintenance crews, taxi drivers—taught us more about Chinese way of life in a short time than any class work in the U.S. could have done.

Moreover, as we experienced China’s historical sites for ourselves, we found ourselves reflecting and connecting the new to the known. For instance, we had a basic understanding of the origins of the Great Wall when we visited, but all sat on the Wall the day before we returned home, something within me changed. I watched the people refl ect around me, but I did not think “this was built during the Ming Dynasty,” and list off historical facts from my studies. I did, however, sit and refl ect about how many feet had travelled along the Wall, how many years and hopes and fears had been placed on the rocks, and how this World Wonder was now under my feet, not just in the pages of a book. That moment made me, as well as many of my classmates, feel like I understand at least one snippet of both Chinese historical and modern life. Even further still, this trip provided an opportunity for creating personal connections between UNA students and Chinese students as well as building relationships between UNA and Tianjin Foreign Studies University. Weekly, we visited the Binha School of Tianjin Foreign
As 20-somethings in today’s world, my friend Jocent and I listen to the same music, laugh at the same jokes, share similar sentiments toward the world at large, and understand how to appreciate our differences.

More connections developed when we were introduced to many Chinese UNA alumni at a reception on our last night in Beijing. We shared stories of our experiences, learned about their degree programs at UNA, and discussed their businesses and futures. Indeed, the impacts of many of our new relationships are yet to be fully realized, but I know that we will continue to feel the influences for years to come.

Ultimately, as Mark Twain once said, “Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness.” What better way to be globally prepared than to find out just what is beyond our borders? We have not only shattered many misconceptions about China and America through our travel, but we have also been given the distinction of study abroad students as we further our own careers and hope to make a positive impact on our world. But, we walk away from the experience with more than just that distinction: we have, tucked away in our minds, a deeper understanding of a country that influences our daily lives in the U.S. now and will increasingly do so in the future.

China has an ancient culture, but the breakneck pace of economic development over the past thirty years is changing Chinese society. The children of the One-Child policy (sometimes called the Little Emperors) have a stronger sense of individuality, a more Western outlook than previous generations. They listen to the same music as their Western counterparts. They want the same good life. And they are willing to work hard to get it. Our students have stiff competition and need to elevate their game.

China has a Communist government, but the people have a strong capitalistic streak. One party rule does not mean homogeneity. The party has competing factions, pragmatists and ideologues vie for influence. China has found a way (one country, two systems) to accommodate the return of Macao and Hong Kong to Chinese rule without destroying their thriving economies. Economic development zones experiment with new rules to provide incentives for foreign direct investment; e.g., in the Binhai New Area, it will be possible to trade land use rights, something previously not permitted.

With development comes incremental liberalization. While this is not Mao’s China anymore, dissent is still suppressed and information is still censored or restricted, to the detriment of economic interests.

We need to clarify the link between freedom of speech, of inquiry, of information flow and economic prosperity. It is easier for us to do that when we are engaged with the Chinese in business and education ventures.

China has problems and promises. Air quality is poor. The current rate of growth is unsustainable, which means there will be significant adjustments when growth slows. The financial system is weak; by world standards, protections for intellectual property are weak. Corruption in both business and government is a threat. These problems are legion. But there are plenty of opportunities for those who grasp how to solve these problems. Those who choose to engage with China in business and education will seize not only economic opportunity, but also influence opportunity. Without engagement, we will not influence the Chinese. We need to show, not tell.

Whether we engage or not, China will affect our future. The scale of what is happening in China is unprecedented in human history. Unless Chinese development is handled well, there will be tremendous degradation of the global environment and potential political instability as national economies compete for scarce resources.

China needs Western know-how in order to succeed. We need China to succeed, for the sake of our own future and for the future of our world. Our fledgling programs to send UNA students to study in China is an investment in this future. Join us to send the next wave of students to China in 2012 and invest in making that future more secure.
Bright, verdant ferns swung in the breeze between the Memorial Amphitheatre’s columns while rocking chairs sat empty beneath them, turned in attention to the yarns spun for two days on that 77-year-old stage.

For one weekend in May, this historic fixture at the center of UNA’s campus transformed into a shared front porch for hundreds of festival goers.

Those in attendance listened for hours as storytellers from around the country took turns weaving tales from their lifetimes of memories. The amphitheatre and surrounding sloped hillside served as a perfect venue for members of the community, students, faculty, staff, and visitors from afar as they dragged up lawn chairs and blankets for the festival. Some knitted, some brought their canine friends, and others picnicked while listening to the tales woven over the course of two days.

One undeniable fact about the South—folks down here know how to tell stories. It’s in their blood. Before the days of the 12-screen cinema and uncountable television channels, it’s what Southerners did. After coming in from working the soil or milking the cows or breathing in fibers all week at the cotton mills, they pulled up a seat on the front porch to disappear into the fables and tall tales of long-winded kinfolk, while the lightning bugs and stars flickered in the background.

So when they gather ‘round and pay for someone to tell them stories, there’s a high standard to be met. Without a doubt, the stories of Andy Offutt Irvin, Carmen Daddy, Donald Davis, Bill Lepp and others were worth their weight in gold during the inaugural UNA Front Porch Storytelling Festival.

“What exactly is a storytelling festival?” you may be asking yourself. Jan Ingle (’85), former UNA Alumni Association president, acknowledged that if you’re not familiar with the storytelling festival culture, you might not know what to expect.

Ingle attended after her best friend and fellow alumnae Cindy Ardis (’79), who lives in Sumter, S.C., encouraged her to go.

“Ardis is an avid storytelling festival goer, and was so excited the festival was going to be [at UNA],” Ingle said. “If she hadn’t told me how wonderful it was, and how I would love it, I might not have made plans to come. Without having been, you don’t know what to expect or how good it’s going to be.”

The storytelling culture has evolved into a nationwide following of folks who gather to—well, tell stories. They share the characters of their pasts, their childhood memories and sometimes, just the fantastical outcomes they wish had actually happened.

“You feel like you know these people by listening to these stories. They’re heart-warming, feel-good. They all had different perspectives on life, and listening to them was fascinating,” Ingle said. “I had never been to a storytelling festival before, and it was enthralling. Just…laughter through tears. I loved very minute of it.”

Most of the attendees had no previous connection to UNA. Kevin Cain, a Birmingham resident, is a fan of storytelling festivals, and was excited to see what UNA’s festival would have to offer.

“It’s an amazing adventure, just sitting back and listening to stories. It just kind of pulls you into a time in the past,” Cain said. “Without the oral tradition, we wouldn’t be able to see that. Storytellers take us on a little journey into their own lives. It’s…it’s like clean comedy, and there’s something there for everybody.”

Cain said the festival was well worth the drive from Birmingham to Florence. He has attended other regional storytelling fests in Athens, Huntsville, and Sedona, and was excited to learn of a new one developing in north Alabama, especially one that included Irvin and Lepp, both of whom he’d seen before. “This festival was even better [than the others] because the majority...
First impressions are sometimes misleading. I found that out very quickly. Storyteller Donald Davis (who I picked up at the airport and greeted with a, “You don’t look like a storyteller!”) proved to be the epitome of what the craft is about. Now, I can visualize his actions (arms and legs and facial expressions), hand-tied bow tie, and long sleeved dress shirt and linen trousers, and can hear with laughter ringing the tales and pictures he painted with words. He was amazing! Donald, who has retired from his first profession, travels 42 weeks out of the year to festivals. Bill Lepp traveled with his wife and two children to northwest Alabama from West Virginia. Syd Lieberman is a retired school teacher from north of Chicago. UNA’s Bill Foster played the role of moderator.

We were fortunate to kick off our inaugural festival with the very best tellers from across the country. The tellers have a bevy of groupies or listeners who keep the tellers on their toes looking for new and different stories to share.

In the first of the storytelling festival, master of ceremonies Dr. Bill Foster shared Windham’s letter written to UNA President Bill Cale, in which she shared her regrets for missing the festival. Later in the morning, storyteller Lepp addressed Windham’s absence and jokingly said his heard of calling in sick, but this was the first time he’s ever heard of someone phoning in “old.” A chuckle washed over audience, which included many friends and admirers of Windham. Her friends and family announced her death a few weeks later on June 12—10 days after her 93rd birthday. She was one of best-known storytellers in the country.

Mark your calendar for the 2012 University of North Alabama Front Porch Storytelling Festival set for May 18 and 19 in the Memorial Amphitheatre.

MY FIRST EXPERIENCE WON’T BE MY LAST

Boy, was I ever wrong!

By Carol Lyles (’70)

The original headliner for UNAs event was Kathryn Tucker Windham, an Alabama-born storytelling celebrity. She’s well-known in her home state for her children’s ghost story book series—13 Ghosts and Jeffrey. She visited UNA in 2006 to speak as part of the annual Distinguished Events series. Windham was unfortunately not able to attend the festival, however, citing health problems.

"I know I plan to attend, and as soon as I know the date for next year’s festival, I’ll have it on my calendar,” Ingle said. For more information about the UNA Front Porch Storytelling Festival (www.una.edu/storytelling), or to donate, please contact the festival at 256-765-4663, or e-mail storytelling@una.edu. Follow the festival on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/UNAstorytellingfestival, and on Twitter at http://twitter.com/UNAstoryfest.

The UNA Family Will Miss Our Friend

KATHRYN TUCKER WINDHAM

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The first morning of the storytelling festival, master of ceremonies Dr. Bill Foster shared Windham’s letter written to UNA President Bill Cale, in which she shared her regrets for missing the festival. Later in the morning, storyteller Lepp addressed Windham’s absence and jokingly said his heard of calling in sick, but this was the first time he’s ever heard of someone phoning in “old.” A chuckle washed over audience, which included many friends and admirers of Windham. Her friends and family announced her death a few weeks later on June 12—10 days after her 93rd birthday. She was one of best-known storytellers in the country.
SERVING SCHOLARSHIPS

John Doughty (’64) has a special interest: helping young women who compete on the athletic field.

John taught PE and coached girls’ programs during his long teaching career. He is a believer in the women’s athletics programs at UNA, and he chooses to give back so that young athletes can reach their potential and complete their education.

You, too, can designate your support and feed your Passions. Give to the Scholarship of your choice.

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rmpettus@una.edu • www.una.edu/give
Mark White (’80) has joined the tourism staff of the Greater Limestone County Chamber of Commerce.

Luther Bishop (’81) was named vice president and business development officer for U.S. Bank Institutional Trust & Custody of Birmingham. He is responsible for developing new business for the bank’s Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee division. He has 19 years of experience in custody trust and asset management.

The Lions will take on Abilene Christian University in Arlington, Texas. Reserve your tickets now for just $25 each.

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COWBOYS STADIUM brought his acclaimed one-man play, “Frank Lloyd Wright,” to Florence and performed it at the Rosenbaum Home.

Alice Caron Watts (’71) has been named to the Girl Scouts North-Central Alabama Board of Directors.

Jacob Flanagan has been recently hired as an Anniston assistant coach. Flanagan, who played at UNA, worked as an assistant at Winston County where he coached quarterbacks, wide receivers, and defensive backs.

Harry Smith (’64) was inducted as an honorary member into the UNA Eta Alpha Chapter of the Delta Mu Delta International Honor Society in business administration.

Buck Williams is a 2011 Limestone County Sports Hall of Fame inductee. He played at UNA from 1985-89.

Patrick Hartley (’92) has been appointed as the executive director of the Alabama Music Hall of Fame. He was hired for the position after a unanimous vote by Hall of Fame board members. He is a graduate of UNA and is set to receive his master’s degree in nonprofit management from Belmont University. Barnard has a background in working with nonprofit organizations and music merchandising.

Kimberly Mauldin (’94) has been inducted as an honorary member into the Delta Mu Delta International Honor Society in business administration. Mrs. Mauldin has served as Director of Admissions at the University of North Alabama since 1995. She has been the recipient of several awards at UNA: Alpha Theta Chi Honorary Inductee, Outstanding Service Award, UNA Faculty/Staff Alumni Award, and Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society Inductee.

Jessica Christ (’95) is a 2011 Limestone County Sports Hall of Fame inductee who earned 22 letters while participating in sports at Elkmont High School. She earned six letters
Luis Fisher (’08) completed a Master of Arts in Teaching degree from Trevecca Nazarene University. She was hired as the director and instructor of Music at Mission Heights Preparatory High School in Casa Grande, Ariz.

Scott Harbour (’03) is the Director of Retail Sales at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, Ala.

Hayden Strickland (’03) has been promoted to Executive Director of GIS Services at Magnolia River Services, Inc., in Huntsville, Ala.

Crystal Cagle Holland (’05) teaches kindergarten at Sulligent Elementary School and has two children.

Alvin Taylor (’05) has recently been appointed to Meridian Public School District Superintendent in Mississippi. He received his education specialist degree from the University of North Alabama.

Nicky Ray (’96) is the Pastor of Lynn Church of God in Lynn, Ala.  

Pastor of Lynn Church of God in Lynn, Ala.

UNA's IN MEMORY

James Brink served in the U.S. Navy and earned the battle honors Posts. After his discharge from the Navy, he moved to Florence and briefly attended Florence State Teachers College and worked at Reynolds Metal. He was with Curtis Candy Company for 11 years, and he was the founder and owner of J. M. Brink Apartments.

Mabel Burgess attended Florence State Teachers College and received her teaching certificate. She taught second grade in Sheffield, Ala., and later worked at TVA.

Lucille Nicholson (’52) taught for two years, and then dropped out to accept a teaching job at Greenhill School. While at FSCC, she played baseball for Coach Eddie Flowers. After teaching two years at Greenhill, she enrolled in the prelaw program at the University of Alabama. Following his graduation and admission to practice by the Supreme Court of Alabama, he returned to Florence to open a private law practice. Frank conducted a successful law practice in Florence at the firm of Potts & Young for more than 70 years. He served as a part-time County Solicitor, Administrator of the Alabama Alcoholic Beverage Control Board, and Chairman of that board for three subsequent Governors. He also served as the attorney for the Lauderdale County School Board for more than a decade.

Jonathan Sullivan played football as a defensive lineman under head coaches Mark Hudspeth in 2008 and Terry Bowden in 2009.

Nicholas Watkins was a former student at Kilby Elementary, Brashard High School, and the University of North Alabama.

Mary Regna Baltes Howard was active in the Madison Cross Roads Home Demonstration Club and served as president. She received a teacher's degree from Florence State Teacher's College and taught school at Riverton, New Sharon, and Pulaski Pike Schools.

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Philip Zahnd (’72) served active duty during the Vietnam War. He served his country on a nuclear submarine tender, the USS Canopus, in the U.S. Army during the Korean War after attending Florence State Teachers College. After his discharge he came back to Florence, and worked as an electrician for several years. In 1960, he founded Irons’ Electric and successfully operated it until his retirement in 2009.

Paul Mitchell Lackey attended the University of North Alabama and was also a member of Alpha Tau Omega fraternity. He worked as a make-up artist and in retail sales.

Frank Potts enrolled in Florence State Teachers College, which he attended for two years, and then dropped out to accept a teaching job at Greenhill School. While at FSCC, he played baseball for Coach Eddie Flowers. After teaching two years at Greenhill, he enrolled in the prelaw program at the University of Alabama. Following his graduation and admission to practice by the Supreme Court of Alabama, he returned to Florence to open a private law practice. Frank conducted a successful law practice in Florence at the firm of Potts & Young for more than 70 years. He served as a part-time County Solicitor, Administrator of the Alabama Alcoholic Beverage Control Board, and Chairman of that board for three subsequent Governors. He also served as the attorney for the Lauderdale County School Board for more than a decade.

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Bobby Jack Graben ('77) was an educator, coaching and teaching for 33 years in Alabama and Florida schools. Graben taught drivers education and drug and alcohol classes for the 18th Judicial Circuit after retiring from the Saint Lucie County School District. He served 1953-1963 as a military reservist in the Alabama and Florida National Guard during the Korean conflict and Cuban missile crisis.

Patricia Cook Graham ('79) was a member of Florence Teachers Association, the Alabama Education Association, and taught special education at Weeden School. She was employed by Bank Independent in charge of all sales offices at all of the bank’s branches. She was the former manager of Parisian department store in Florence. She was very community-oriented, spending a lot of time with the St. Joseph Catholic Foundation board and other local agencies.

Mary Jan Crane ('86) was killed in a two-car accident. She was employed by Bank Independent in charge of all sales offices at all of the bank's branches. She was the former manager of Parisian department store in Florence. She was very community-oriented, spending a lot of time with the St. Joseph Catholic Foundation board and other local agencies.

1980s

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Alumni Information Update

Name (include maiden name if applicable) ___________________________________________________________

Graduation Year(s) and Major(s) ________________________________________________________________

Address ___________________________________________________________________________________

City ___________________________ State ________ Zip __________

Home telephone _____________________________________ E-mail address ____________________________

Business telephone ___________________________ Position _____________________________

I want to get involved with UNA alumni in my area... [ ] Local Club Development [ ] Homecoming [ ] Alumni Committee Assignment [ ] Mentoring [ ] Athletic Events [ ] Board Member [ ] Recruit Students [ ] Reunions

Have you won an award, changed jobs, earned a promotion, or completed another degree? Your UNA classmates would like to know more about it! Send us your news and we will publish it in a subsequent issue of the UNA Alumni Magazine.

UPDATE YOUR RECORDS

That's why your gift to the UNA Scholarship Fund is so important. With your help, little Lions like Avery won't just dream of going to college - they'll begin drafting the blueprints.

BUILDING DREAMS: BUILDING LIVES. BUILDING THE PRIDE.

MAKE YOUR GIFT TODAY

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