Make no mistake about it, the poet-in-residence at ABAC loves poetry. But Dr. Jeff Newberry returns to his roots as the author of a new crime drama fiction novel, titled “A Stairway to the Sea,” set to be published by Pulpwood Press in 2016.

“Fiction writing was my first calling,” Newberry, a professor in the School of Liberal Arts, said. “Even my poems are narrative. I am a storyteller first and foremost.”

While the story actually began as a series of poems, Newberry discovered that he needed the expansiveness of a novel to do the story justice. He wrote the first chapter about five years ago while vacationing in St. Augustine, Fla. He was inspired by two of his favorite things – his love for the Gulf Coast and southern writing, especially authors Larry Brown and James Lee Burke.

“It took a couple of years to get the first draft written,” Newberry said. “I devoted my summers to writing it. When I was invited to attend the Sanibel Island Writers Conference as a part of the faculty last year, I brought what I had written to the conference for feedback.”

That feedback came from two fellow authors and colleagues, John Dufresne, professor in the Department of English at Florida International University, and Tom Franklin, professor in the Department of English at the University of Mississippi. Newberry then got in touch with an agent in New York about his book.

“While the agency declined to represent me, they sent me a letter with some suggestions about the development of my main character,” Newberry said. “I spent last summer rewriting the last third of the book.”

In the middle of his rewrite, Newberry received a call from crime author, friend, and fellow North Florida native Michael Lister. Lister thought that his publisher, Pulpwood Press, might be interested in Newberry’s novel.

“My book is a crime novel, and Michael is a fan of crime novels,” said Newberry. “He thought that Pulpwood Press might be interested in publishing it.”

Newberry did a vast amount of research for the crime novel. He went back to his hometown of Port St. Joe, Fla., many times to visit his best friend and Port

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ABAC AGR Fraternity Donates to Alzheimer’s

The Gamma Delta Chapter of the Alpha Gamma Rho (AGR) fraternity at ABAC raised $6,500 for the Alzheimer’s Association through the organization’s semi-annual barrel race. This year the fraternity had the highest participating group with 227 riders from all over the Southeast. AGR also contributed over 500 community service hours to the barrel race through volunteering to maintain and repaint the rodeo arena, announcer’s booth, and concession stand prior to the event.

ABAC Writers’ Harvest Features Nonfiction Author Thurs.

The annual Writers’ Harvest sponsored by “Pegasus,” the ABAC literary magazine, will take place on Thursday at 7 p.m. at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village Conference Center at ABAC. The featured reader for the Writers’ Harvest is author Ira Sukrungruang. He is a Thai American writer born in 1976 in Oak Lawn, Ill., a suburb just south of Chicago. In 1994 he graduated from Oak Lawn Community High School.

The price of admission to the Writers’ Harvest is one nonperishable food item or canned good. All donations go to support Brother Charlie’s Rescue Mission. Staff members of “Pegasus” will collect canned goods and non-perishable items through the date of the Writers’ Harvest.

Donations can also be dropped off at the offices of “Pegasus” co-advisors, Dr. Jeff Newberry and Brandi Arrington. Newberry’s office is located in King Hall, Room 2C and Arrington’s office is located in Conger Hall, Room 308. Donations can also be dropped off at the “Pegasus” office located on the bottom floor of the Carlton Center.

For more information on the Writers’ Harvest, interested persons can contact Newberry via e-mail at jnewberry@abac.edu or go to https://www.facebook.com/events/480150552169561/.

ABAC Foundation Announces Recipients of Faculty Enrichment Fund

The ABAC Foundation created the ABAC Faculty Enrichment Fund in the Fall of 2015 to increase the numbers and proportion of faculty members conducting scholarship and creative activities, particularly those that engage ABAC students in undergraduate research, consistent with our Destination ABAC goals. 14 proposals were submitted and reviewed by a faculty committee to make a final selection of this year’s recipients.

“The ABAC Foundation has a proud history of supporting ABAC’s mission of providing a high quality educational experience for our students,” said Lynn Lovett, Chair of the ABAC Foundation Board of Trustees. “The ABAC Faculty Enrichment Fund is designed to encourage and reward our faculty for their research efforts that parallel the foundation’s mission and the new ABAC Strategic Plan. Providing support for these four research projects ultimately supports the growth of the college and success for our students.”

“I am so appreciative of the ABAC Foundation’s investment in our faculty through the creation of the Faculty Enrichment Fund,” said Dr. Gail Dillard, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs. “The selection committee was impressed with the number and quality of the proposals submitted by our faculty for this new initiative. The four proposals selected for funding were very well focused and included the involvement of our students in the research process.”

$30,000 was designated for the 2015-2016 school year and four proposals were selected for awards:

- Dr. Jen Wallin-Ruschman, Assistant Professor, Psychology
  - Research Project Title: Understanding the role of emotions and rationality in the process of critical consciousness development: a mixed methods study in the college classroom

- Dr. Kingsley D. Dunkley, Associate Professor, Department of Science
  - Research Project Title: Evaluation of Growth phase and gene expressions of Shigella flexneri in response to environmental factors

- Dr. Heather Cathcart and Dr. Carrie Thurber, Assistant Professors, Department of Science
  - Research Project Title: A Nematode Never Forgets: The Effects of Ginkgo biloba on Memory and Gene Expression in an Alzheimer’s Model.

- Dr. Christopher Beals, Assistant Professor, Department of Science
  - Research Project Title: Luminescent Measurement of Peroxidase Enzyme Production Induced by Abiotic Stress in Watercress (Nasturtium officinale)
The ABAC Concert Choir will perform a variety of choral music at its fall concert at 7 p.m. on Tuesday in Howard Auditorium on the campus of ABAC. The concert is open to the public at no charge.

Dr. Susan Roe, Head of the Department of Fine Arts and a Professor of Voice, said the choir continues to increase in size and now has more than 65 students from all over the southeastern region of the United States. All soloists for the performance are students in the music program working toward an Associate of Fine Arts degree in Music.

The fall concert centers on pieces of music composed by Rosephanye Powell, Professor of Voice at Auburn University, as well as traditional songs of praise. Powell will be the clinician/composer for this year’s ABAC Choral Day on Nov. 12, open only to high school students who have registered for the workshop. She has her master’s in music from Westminster Choir College and her bachelor’s in music education from Alabama State University. She also earned her doctorate of music in vocal performance from Florida State University, where she was also a University Fellow.

The choir’s selections for the evening begin with “The Star Spangled Banner” arranged by Darmon Meader, followed by Zoe Hobby’s arrangement of Wayne Jones’ and the late Dr. Libby Campbell’s composition of ABAC’s Alma Mater. The choir will be accompanied by Dr. Melissa Slawsky, Assistant Professor of Piano and Theory for the ABAC music program.

The entire concert choir will perform “The Heaven Are Telling” from Franz Joseph Haydn’s “The Creation,” with the ABAC Instrumental Ensemble and featured soloists Taylor Walker from Omega, Jay Branch from Tifton, and Terrence Gibson, Jr., from Baxley. The Choir will follow up with “The Moon Is Distant from the Sea” by David N. Childs.

The ABAC Chamber Singers will present two pieces by Rosephanye Powell, “E Oru O” and “The Word Was God.” The Singers will also perform “Jazz Cantate” by Andy Beck. The ABAC Percussion Ensemble will join the ABAC Singers on another of Powell’s works, “Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child.”

The Men’s Quartet comprised of Branch, Matt Fuller from Fitzgerald, Gibson, and Kyle Robinson from Tifton will sing with the Concert Choir “Saints Bound for Heaven” arranged by Alice Parker and Robert Shaw. Gibson and Lauren Lever of Tifton will join the ABAC Concert Choir as soloists for the evening’s closing performance of Powell’s “I Wanna Be Ready.”

For more information, interested persons can contact Roe at (229) 391-4943.

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Department Patrol Officer Vince Everett to get a better understanding of the life of a police officer, including all the protocol and terminology. Newberry’s main character, Justin Everson, is loosely based on Everett.

“There are definite contrasts to Vince and Justin,” Newberry said. “The biggest difference is that Vince is a very even-keeled guy. Nothing gets to him. Justin, the main character, is the opposite. He is a complete hot-head. He’s quick to judge and quick to anger. But I believe all characters should have flaws. Characters without flaws are boring.”

Newberry also enlisted the help of ABAC Assistant Professor of History Russell Pryor in the School of Liberal Arts.

“The novel has a sub-plot dealing with organized labor, and Russell was instrumental in helping me with the accuracy of this aspect in the story,” Newberry said.

Author of two poetry collections, “Brackish” and “A Visible Sign,” Newberry is also the co-editor of a poetry anthology, “The Gulf Stream: Poems of the Gulf Coast.” He teaches composition, literature, and creative writing in the School of Liberal Arts at ABAC and serves as faculty adviser for “Pegasus,” the college’s literary magazine.

Newberry received his bachelor’s degree in English in 1998 and his master’s degree in English and Creative Writing in 2000 from the University of West Florida. He earned his Ph.D. in Creative Writing and Poetry with a minor in 20th Century American Literature and 20th Century British Literature from the University of Georgia in 2010.
The Office of College Advancement at ABAC will offer a special treat this holiday season with a trip to Callaway Gardens’ Fantasy in Lights on Dec. 12. This trip is open to anyone with the desire to travel.

The price for this trip is $100 per person. The price includes transportation, lunch, and admission to Callaway Gardens and Fantasy in Lights. Current ABAC faculty, staff, students, and Alumni Association members receive a $5 discount. A $50 deposit must be made by Nov. 15 with the final payment due by Dec. 1. Space is limited for this excursion.

The one-day trip will begin with lunch at the legendary Moore’s Whistling Pig restaurant in Pine Mountain. Travelers will then arrive at the park and take part in a guided tour from the comfort of the tour bus before attending the Birds of Prey show. Visitors will have some free time to explore the Butterfly House and the rest of the Gardens before catching a 6 p.m. trolley ride through the Fantasy in Lights.

For more information, visit www.abac.edu/travel, contact ABAC travel coordinator Lynda Fisher at lfisher@abac.edu, or call (229) 391-4900.

More than 60 Percent of ABAC Employees Give Back

“Give Back to ABAC” was a great success in its first year with 61.22 percent of employee participation. This is a large increase from the previous participation rate in 2014 of 11%. This is a remarkable milestone to reach within the ABAC family. Employees had the opportunity to give back to the program areas of their choice. Therefore they are able to see the impacts of their private gifts on campus every day. Employee giving sets a great example for alumni, donors, and the community and shows that they truly believe in the mission of ABAC.

Representatives from each area volunteered to encourage their colleagues to give back. Clayton Riehle was one of the many volunteers that stepped up. His favorite part about ABAC is “the sense of family and community.” Since his time at ABAC he has “never seen an institution that has so many faculty members receiving their 10, 15 and 20 year pins of service to one college.” “My colleagues are happy with the college and we are proud to work here, why not give back to an institution that we are all so proud to work for,” states Riehle.

“When the opportunity arose to step forward and encourage others to give back, I jumped at the chance to be an advocate in my department for the college,” states Riehle. He said that “the campaign had a nice jingle and easily encouraged others to want to be a part of it.” ABAC is specifically special to him because it gave him a chance to shine and be a part of such a close family.

Thanks to everyone’s generosity, the “Give Back to ABAC” campaign was a great success. We would like to say a special thank you to the faculty and staff volunteers that presented the information to their departments as well as those that participated.

School and Department Participation Rates and Volunteers:
- Agriculture and Natural Resources (Renata Elad) – 35.48%
- Liberal Arts (Bonnie Asselin) – 41.67%
- Human Sciences (Donna Campbell) – 50%
- Science and Mathematics (Beth Thornton) – 57.14%
- Business and Finance (Deidra Jackson) – 60%
- Information Technology (Clayton Riehle) – 68.75%
- Academic Affairs (Nancy Anthony) – 70.37%
- Stafford School of Business (Abul Sheikh) – 83.33%
- Nursing (Deborah Drummonds) – 86.67%
- President’s Office and Public Relations (Lindsey Roberts) – 100%
- College Advancement (Sue Mastraio) – 100%

ABAC Birthdays
10   Robert Carpenter
11   Alma Young
11   Judy Perry
13   Matt Cobb