



THE ASSOCIATES

Behind Closed Doors

The signs are understated along Ehle Drive. One of them announces quietly “The School of Design and Production.” We walk by it to go to productions at Performance Place and Watson Hall and hardly notice it. Last Thursday night, however, there was an attachment to the sign. “Associates Event,” it read.

Walking from the dark outside into the bright lights of the building and down the hall to the meeting room, Associates saw offices open (That was Eric Rimes, nationally known lighting designer, sitting in an office on the left and talking with students!) and activity everywhere. All that action is always going on behind those closed doors, and we never knew it until Thursday night!

“They are the unsung heroes of everything that happens on campus,” Mary Allen Martin, Behind the Scenes Co-Chair, said about the School of Design and Production in her welcoming remarks. Anne Sessions introduced Dean Michael Kelley who welcomed us and echoed Mary Allen’s remarks about the jobs of design and production--what they teach the students who will be working in theaters all over the country: “Get behind the curtains, stay out of sight, keep your voices down.” The sets, sound and lighting, costumes, wigs and makeup, background noises (thunder, cannons, and such), and other production elements must always be enough to enhance the drama but not enough to draw attention to themselves. It is a delicate balance.

Dean Kelley then introduced the project teams for three upcoming School of Drama productions. The team members spoke about how they had worked together to reach consensus on how a particular drama should be presented. Two things were impressive: they had *studied* the script down to its most nuanced meaning, and that depth of knowledge gave them confidence to speak well and clearly to an audience like The Associates about the choices they had made. These were “techies” with a *lot* of heart.

After Dean Michael Kelley's opening comments and the preview of upcoming productions, ten student docents led smaller groups of about fifteen Associates through a maze of large rooms, each of which had students working. The paint room had students painting boards, painstakingly doing work that will make the scenery look authentic on stage. The room was large with high ceilings and extraordinarily bright lighting. Above and around the painters, there were relics of past sets, impressive and inspirational, created by former students like themselves.

The wig and makeup studio was abuzz with students working, and the costume shop had students stitching by hand and using sewing machines. A stop to look at the room where thousands of costumes are stored, floor to ceiling, according to period, type, and size was awe-inspiring in both its capacity and its organization. In another studio, students were making masks for a local theater's production of *Beauty and the Beast*.

Behind those unimposing closed doors there was, in a word, a bevy of activity. Both students and teachers were at work. The attention to detail paralleled the minute, careful work of the most dedicated dancer or musician. It is no surprise that the employment rate of our School of Design and Production is at ninety-eight percent.

The tour ended with a trip over to Performance Place where there were students setting the stage for *Side Show* in Freedman and *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* in Catawba.

At the end of the evening, The Associates' wonderful hospitality team offered students, faculty, and visiting Associates a table full of wonderful, homemade food. They do it with such grace that it all seems effortless, but here, too, a lot of the work was done behind closed doors, quietly and carefully.

It Starts with a Story

Dean Ruskin Visits

Think about the last time you were deep in conversation about some philosophical idea at your end of the table and you heard someone telling a story at the other end of the table. Chances are, you brought your conversation to a close and joined the story-teller. That is the way it is with stories. They draw us in.

When Susan Ruskin, Dean of the School of Filmmaking, came to speak to our Board and other Associates at the November meeting, she emphasized the importance of telling a good story. It is the first of a three-pronged emphasis that she says is the basis for everything else they do in her division. The emphasis on story-telling is reflected in the new MFA program that is in its first year. Screenwriting and creative producing are the two specialties in that program, making UNCSCA unique among its film school peers. Even in its first year, the program is fully enrolled.

How to tell a story is fundamental. She introduced then the other two emphases of the school, learning how to collaborate and learning the ways and means of production.

She talked about the work done by the screenwriters, the casts, the directors and producers, the scene, sound, and light designers, and the musical score writers who have to arrive at and share the same vision for a film. Learning how to create synthesis from disparate ideas about the story is essential in making a coherent film. It is also very good training for the careers the students are pursuing. Furthermore, by working together successfully in such a way, students start building the network of contacts that they will use in their careers.

Dean Ruskin herself and her staff are a part a network that stretches from here to New York and Los Angeles. In her presentation, she talked about how the contacts they have enhance our programs here. That networking also makes the industry aware of the talents and preparation of our students.

Much of Dean Ruskin's talk focused on the school's leadership in the area of virtual reality—VR, in the jargon. She is excited about working with North Carolina State University (which provides the technical expertise) in probing the possibilities of this relatively new technology. Think about how silent films were revolutionized by sound, how black and white films were changed by technicolor, and how color films

have been enhanced by 3D and HD. Dean Ruskin sees a future in which filmgoers experience films in a way so realistic that the classic “suspension of disbelief” is automatic.

Thank you, Dean Ruskin, for your vision and your leadership and your generosity in coming to speak to the Associates.

News from the Board Meeting

President Susan Melville opened the November meeting by introducing the visitors in the room and giving them a warm welcome. After the approval of the minutes of the October meeting, there was a brief discussion of our involvement with the Pickle Pantry.

“What we know is the need for the pantry is growing,” Susan said and asked if and how we wanted to continue participating in it. Carolyn Bailey said “It’s a no-brainer. The need is great.” She reminded us that the Second Harvest Food Bank no longer supports our pantry. Other members offered their experiences with such sites on other campuses and suggested that we use social media to alert people of the types of food or other necessities (*e.g.*, toothpaste, toilet tissue). The consensus was that we will work to create a way that is convenient and expeditious for people to contribute.

By the numbers, we are doing well. Karen Robinson reported that we have 307 current members. The number is close to what it was at the end of last year with new members replacing the non-renewing members whom we continue to hope to lure back. Bob McNair reported that the **Helpmates** contributed 261.5 hours and that the Board members have put in 314.5 hours. The Helpmates’ year-to-date total is 1015 hours, and the Board’s year-to-date total is 1360 hours.

The next **Salon@Six** is in early December and will feature the Quiescent Quintet, one of the ensembles in the Chrysalis Chamber Music Institute of School of Music. It will be held at Linda and John Garrou’s home and will be limited to forty guests.

Our Associates’ mission statement promises that we will introduce people unfamiliar to UNCSA to the school. The purpose of Salon@Six is to do that.

Think of someone you know that you'd like to connect to the school, and when your invitation comes, invite them to the December 4th Salon@Six. As soon as you have confirmed that they will be your guests, respond to the invitation with your guests' names and contact information. You will need to work fast. These events fill up rapidly. Carolyn Bailey and her team work hard to make these events special.

Mary Allen Martin reported that everything was ready for the **Behind the Scenes** event on November 3rd at the School of Design and Production. She reported that the event was full within three days of the invitation's mailing.

Clare Jordan reported for the **Host Family** team that seventeen students are matched with host families. It is heartwarming to hear how she and her co-chair Anna Goodman matched a Japanese student with a Japanese-speaking family and about how an organ student was matched with Ray Ebert, organist extraordinaire.

Members will get emails about opportunities to provide **cookies** for the high school exam period and for the *Nutcracker* Feed during the next month.

The next meeting of The Associates Board will be December 6th. Hannah Callaway, UNCSA Social and Digital Content Producer, will be the speaker and she will explain how social media can best be used to advance The Associates' mission.

Our Beginnings

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.*

--T. S. Eliot. "Little Gidding" *Four Quartets*

Historian Nancy Gwyn is giving us, bit by bit at our monthly meetings, information about The Associates beginnings. The initial meeting occurred September 28, 1970, and was chaired by Chancellor Robert Suderburg. His wife, Elizabeth, had

suggested that the school needed a volunteer organization, and he called together some of the movers and shakers from our early days.

People attending that first meeting were names that we are familiar with from references to them in *A Passionate Preference* and from years of their association with and support of the school. Among those are Scott Cramer, Thorns Craven, Jim and Pat Toole, Bob Hoffman, Mary Roufail, Paul and Nancy Gwyn, Patti Hoffman, Nancy Pleasants, and Linwood Davis.

Fifty-five people were members that first year. Six committees were set up. Nancy told us about three of those committees in November and will continue the saga at the December meeting. Other founding members from those committees will be mentioned next month. The vision of those early volunteers created what this organization has become.

One of the committees was charged with growing audiences. The founders provided vital links between the school and the Winston-Salem community. They developed long-range plans that forecast the work we are still doing. Our current mission statement includes the phrase, “to support and promote student performances.” Given the current state of sold-out performances at a number of the school’s productions, it is easy to say that their vision is being fulfilled. Nevertheless, there are over eighty productions—over three hundred performances--during the school year. They require a lot of audience! Our job is never done! Those early visionaries knew how important audiences are and how both the school and the community are enriched by our mutual relationship.

There was also a committee dedicated to campus beautification. The campus has changed from those early days of Gray Building and Workplace and of just Crawford Hall and DeMille as principle performance venues. Early Associates cleaned up, prepared ground, and planted bulbs and shrubs to make the campus warmer and more welcoming. Today, we both appreciate and take for granted the work of Jamie Moore and grounds crew who have taken on that work. Associates, though, provided the early vision and labor.

Another committee focused on community service. Relationships between public schools, the Arts Council, and UNCOSA were nourished. Outreach programs to attract local talented music and dance students laid the foundation for today’s Community Music Program, Preparatory Dance, Acting Out, and Film Appreciation Classes.

FALL CALENDAR

Saturday, November 19

Collage; 7:30, Stevens Center

Sunday, December 4

Salon@Six; 5:30, home of Linda and John Garrou.

Remember the procedure for attending:

1. Receive your invitation (look for it in the next few days). *Do not reply before you receive your invitation. We cannot take reservations early*
2. Think of someone who is not familiar with UNCSA
3. Invite him/her (or them) and get an acceptance and contact information
4. RSVP to the invitation with your guests' contact information
5. Your guests are your "ticket" to the event

Tuesday, December 6

Board Meeting; 11:30, Fourth Floor Conference Room, Library

Saturday, December 10

Nutcracker Feed. You will receive information about delivering cookies later

General Information—Important Links

The Associates Website:

<http://www.uncsa.edu/development/volunteeropportunities.htm>

At our website, you will find the Board members listed, the calendar of Associates events and Associates-sponsored events, and other general information.

The Associates Email Address: uncsaassociates@gmail.com

The Performance Calendar Website:

<http://www.uncsa.edu/performances/>

Student Performances Website:

www.uncsa.edu/music/FormShare/StudentRecitals.pdf

Our Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/uncsaassociates>

Newsletter:

beckybrown65@gmail.com