Student Illustrator Sees Talent as Mission

Skilled artists are not always humble. But Matt Gordon, a student in Advertising and Graphic Design, is not only highly talented but modest. In fact, his ambition for his artistic capabilities leans toward the humanitarian.

This spring, Matt was the big winner in this year’s Graphic Design competition at ACC. He took first place honors for Drawing and Illustration, Photography, and Graphic Design. He also exhibited his storytelling skills with the top honor in the student writing category for fiction. Matt has further added to his resume’ with a design seen by motorists traveling on the interstate near the ACC exit: a building wrap on one side of Horticulture Technology’s hydroponic greenhouse. His artwork was chosen last fall by Horticulture Department Head Justin Snyder and ACC President Dr. Martin Nadelman from a field of student entries.

“I’m really excited because I don’t know what my potential is,” he says, adding that he’s afraid of sounding superior. But pretentiousness is not a factor in Matt’s personality, having spent five years with his family in Pakistan where they founded a school for poverty-stricken children. Originally from Colorado, Matt began his tenure in Pakistan at age 16 in 2003 with his parents and older brother. They went there as part of a Christian organization called “Youth With a Mission”. They created a community development organization called Shining Light International. Part of this involved founding a school, Shining Light Academy.

See GORDON on page 2

Hot Seat: ACC Horticulture Hosts National Exams

Alamance Community College’s Horticulture Technology program played host on June 13-14 for the Landscape Industry Certification Technician exam, the only site in North Carolina and one of only 20 nationwide in which horticulture professionals can earn first-time certifications. About 50 people from across the state underwent two days of testing on the ACC campus in Graham.

Thursday, June 13, consisted of classroom written tests. Participants headed outdoors on Friday, June 14, for the hands-on portion of the multiple certification exams. Professional judges, participants and representatives from the state and national organizations participated.

Coordinating the outdoor exams was Justin Snyder, ACC’s Horticulture Technology department head, and Kakki Collins for the North Carolina Nursery and Landscape Association. ACC last hosted
Matt says he began to find a sense of purpose in his artwork, using it to spread “a message of hope.” “I started drawing to promote what we were doing in Pakistan. I felt a sense of purpose in that I could use art to convince people to donate money to Shining Light, to support the school in Pakistan.”

To say that Matt’s talent is God-given pleases him. “Balti Girl”, his first-place illustration in the recent ACC juried art competition, was done with brush and ink. He referenced a photograph taken by a friend while they were teaching young students in an extremely remote village of Pakistan.

“It’s hard to create what someone else wants me to do,” he says. “I can’t really explain except to say that it’s easier for me to just open myself up to whatever my hand wants to do.”

He says sculpting was his first artistic love, and that’s when he discovered that his artwork hardly ever turns out like he or anyone else might expect.

Instructor David Davenport, Matt says, has been a big influence in helping to develop his technique and skills. “His assignments have helped me realize my potential.”

But Matt’s talents do not rest only in art. He also won first place in the student writing contest for a short story he titled “Cold.” It’s about a mountaineer who, after a stint in the army, has trouble coping and finds that scaling a peak is what brings him to life. When he falls while climbing, he experiences memories of defining moments in his life.

Matt says he first realized he had some writing ability at age 18 when he began writing about his experience helping with the relief effort following an earthquake in Pakistan. He was permitted to assist in activities not normally allowed for a youth volunteer in the States.

“I realized as I wrote about this that I could convey a message in writing just like in art.” But he says the experience in the relief effort was so profoundly life-changing that he has yet to finish the narrative.

“I’m a very passionate person. If what I do in my art or writing inspires people to do something bigger than themselves, then that excites me.”

Matt finishes at ACC this fall, he has dreams about what he wants to do next. He thinks about a career at Disney or Pixar, but at the same time he feels drawn to use his skills working at a non-profit. He says art is more meaningful when it’s done for a cause.

Still, he realizes that he is only at the beginning of wherever his artistic talents take him. Two years ago when he entered ACC, he was just starting to put his hand to paper in a consistent way.

Says Matt: “I don’t feel I’ve tapped into all my capabilities yet. It’s just important that I do something useful with what abilities I have.”

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**NEW GED TESTS, COSTS COMING EARLY 2014**

If you (or someone you know) have been putting it off, now is the time to consider earning a GED. Beginning in 2014, test rules will change and costs are expected to rise in North Carolina. The difficulty level of the questions and content is expected to increase significantly, to bring the test more in line with current standards of high school completion, says Claire Dixon, Director of Literacy.

- Current GED test scores are anticipated to expire Dec. 31, 2013; students will likely be required to start over on a new test series beginning Jan. 2, 2014.
- North Carolina is currently considering three possible options for high school equivalency tests. Any one of the three options will be more expensive than the current GED, which is priced at $35. Costs of a new test may go as high as $120 for the battery, plus $24 per re-test.
- For more information, go to [www.GEDtestingservice.com](http://www.GEDtestingservice.com). Call ACC’s Literacy division at 336-506-4376 before old scores expire.
Q. Your curriculum and why you chose it?  
A. Biotechnology, because I love science, especially chemistry and biology.

Q. What you wish people knew about you—but probably don’t?  
A. I’m a free thinker.

Q. Your 15 minutes of fame (a time when you received recognition/won a contest/performing, etc.)?  
A. I was named ACC’s nominee this year for the Dallas Her ring Achievement Award.

Q. If you could visit any place in the world for free, where?  
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Q. TV program you never miss?  
A. Nova on PBS.

Q. What person (living or dead) would you most like to have dinner with, and what would you ask him/her?  
A. My late grandmother. I’d ask her what hurdles she had to overcome to be a research doctor in the 1920s and 1930s.

3D FUN. Ryan Thompson, graduating this summer from the Mechanical Drafting Technology program, took on a fun project this spring, utilizing Inventor software and a 3D printer to create a three-dimensional Star Wars robot model. Drafting students can download 3D drawings they design using Inventor software into the program’s 3D printer, which builds plastic models layer by layer. Ryan found the robot illustration in AutoCad software’s online library, but still had to fine-tune the specifications for the printer to read the design.

FINANCIAL AID/SCHOLARSHIPS NEWS

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES
- Campus Discovery $2,500 “Advice to Your High School Self” Scholarship—Apply online by July 31 at: www.campus-discovery.com/start
- NC Council of the Blind Scholarship for Visually Impaired Students (local chapter of American Council for the Blind): Four $1,500 scholarships for blind and/or visually impaired high school seniors, college, professional and vocational school students. Applications available in the ACC Financial Aid Office. American Council of the Blind also has national scholarships available at www.acb.org.

HORTICULTURE from page 1

this event in 2011. “This event allows our students to see what it takes to earn a national certification, hopefully encouraging our students to take the steps to earn certifications that will make them more valuable in the job market,” says Snyder. To become a Landscape Industry Certified Technician, an applicant must pass the “common elements” exam plus a core test. Successful completion of the “installation” test demonstrates that an individual has the skills to take a landscape blueprint and implement the design in the field. Passing the “maintenance” test shows that a person has the skills to maintain a landscape project in a professional manner.

Judges at the certification, licensed with the N.C. Nursery and Landscaping Association as well as the national PLANET (Professional Landcare Network), are required to grade the participants on proper technique, safety standards, and making sure each student knows how to maintain and use equipment.

Those from ACC who passed the exams were Horticulture students Jason Boswell, Alexander Nisbet, and Laura Nisbet, and instructors Chad Huggins and Diane Birkemo.

More photos from this event on back page.

STUDENT SNAPSHOT

HEATHER GILLETTE

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A. I was named ACC’s nominee this year for the Dallas Her ring Achievement Award.

Q. If you could visit any place in the world for free, where?  
A. Scuba dive.

Q. Something you can’t live without?  
A. Liquid water and resident microbes.

Q. If you could visit any place in the world for free, where?  
A. South America, maybe Peru or the tropical rainforest.

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Get the 411

BRUSH-UP CLASSES IN MATH AND ENGLISH
- BSP 2000 classes are FREE. Placement Test Prep classes in math and English for students preparing to take the college placement tests. Here’s the upcoming schedule:
  - July 8-25, 1-4 p.m. & 6-9 p.m. (mathematics)
  - Call 506-4376 or email Assessment.Center@alamancecc.edu to register. Indicate name, phone number, session time and subject(s) needed.
  - Deadline to sign up for any Placement Test Prep class is Wednesday, one week before the scheduled class time.

SKILLS LAB OFFERS TUTORING
The Academic Skills Lab has skilled tutors available in a variety of subjects. Peer tutoring is also available. Tutoring is available throughout the week, day and evening. Contact Bill Fonville at 506-4167 for more information.

TWEETER ACC!
Get short, timely messages from ACC. Twitter is a source of instantly updated information. It’s easy to stay updated on a wide variety of topics. Join today and follow ACC happenings by logging at: http://twitter.com/AlamanceCC

ACADEMIC ADVISING CENTER
Located near the lower commons in the main building, the Academic Advising Center offers:
- Academic planning
- Course selection
- Career planning
- University transfer assistance
- ACCess account setup
- WebAdvisor navigation & registration
- Facilitation of selected workshops throughout the academic year
- Access to Add/Drop and Change of Information forms

SUMMER HOURS
- Mon., 7:30 a.m.-7 p.m.
- Tue-Thur, 7:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Fri, 8 a.m.-12 noon

Appointments are preferred. Call Virginia Jeffries at 336-506-4362.
Campus Life

Horticulture Professionals Tested

ACC hosted 50 industry professionals last week who came to the campus for exams in Landscape Industry Certification. (see story inside)

PLANT KNOWLEDGE. Prior to last week’s Landscape Industry Certification Exams, ACC’s Horticulture Department hosted the Certified Plant Professional Exam on June 4. Plant nursery professionals were tested in two parts: a written portion identifies knowledge and skills needed while working in a nursery or landscape operation; the plant ID portion (required by the NC Landscape Contractors Registration Board) demonstrates knowledge of a wide selection of plant material. Seen here are ACC student Ryan Winkler and Diane Birkemo, part-time instructor in the Horticulture Department.

Grounds supervisor and Horticulture instructor CHAD HUGGINS judged the chainsaw exam.

Tree Planting and Staking required participants to explain their procedures to the judges.

COLLEGE TRUSTEES RECOGNITIONS. (Left photo) DR. ANNA M. BASS, who is stepping down as a College trustee, was recognized by her fellow board members in June. Board chairman CARL M. STEINBICKER presents Bass with a plaque honoring her years of service. Bass has served as a trustee since 2007. (Right) College Board of Trustees chairman Steinbicker surprised STEPHANIE WATERS, Executive Assistant to the President, with a bouquet of flowers during the June board meeting. Trustees recognized Waters for her dedicated assistance during the Presidential Search process.