

## Poet's reading shows a wide variety of experience

by Zack Harding  
Arts & Life Editor

Last Friday, Brevard College welcomed poet Ann Fischer Wirth of Oxford Mississippi for a reading in the Myers Dining Hall, with around 40 in attendance.

Wirth teaches environmental literature and other English courses at the University of Mississippi in Oxford, and has an extensive publishing record including two books, *Blue Window* and *Five Terraces*, and has also contributed to the textbook *Environmental South*.

Before moving to Oxford, Wirth grew up in the Northern California area including Berkeley, which had a significant impact on her poetry and writing. Some of her most important inspiration comes from the scenery in the Northern California area: "It grasps me in my heart so deeply that it hurts," she said, describing the oceanside landscapes. Other important influences include her longtime interest in Yoga and hiking, as well as having a career military father and the lifestyle that came with his profession.

Wirth read eleven different poems, showing a variety of different stylistic approaches—her older poetry had a more concrete, narrative approach, while her newer poetry moved into a direction she describe as "more lyrical, and more dreamy."

Some of her longer poetry such as the piece "Army Men," read almost like a journal or memoir; Wirth gave some explanation about the real life occurrences of certain parts of each poem before she started.

The later pieces she read,

such as "What Boat?" and "When you come to love," were shorter and focused around metaphorical language and ideas, such as individual purpose and the relationship between life and death. "Death and life are married to each other," she said, "If we write about life, we are writing about death, if we write about death, we are writing about life."

One particularly standout piece was called "Raccoons," which Wirth described as "a poem about loving to live with animals, and learning how to love to live with animals." The poem was essentially about a Raccoon that had died within the walls of her house, and the rather peculiar circumstances that she and her husband, Peter Wirth, had to face because of it.

The reading ended with a very involved question and answer session, during which members of the audience asked many questions about her poetry and life. She said that the move to a Southern state and atmosphere plays a big part in the development of her writing, particularly what she called the "wet, hot, Mississippi." She said that some of the biggest differences between Mississippi and California were the deep-rooted religious ideals and conservatism, and the strong family ties she found in the latter.

With her poetry Wirth hopes "to give people pleasure," and "to restore a sense of intensity and beauty in their lives." Her approach to poetry and message is summed up well in a line from the first poem she read, "Blue Window": "Why not be anyone, why not go anywhere?"

Dust 'em off Movies:

## Home Alone



by Chris Gaskill  
Staff Writer

*Home Alone*  
Directed by Chris Columbus  
1990/20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox,  
Hughes Entertainment



With the Christmas season fast approaching, it's time to pull out *Home Alone*. It's a warm-hearted family movie that is perfect for the holidays. The film might seem slightly cartoonish, but with slapstick humor and the classic kid who bests the adults, *Home Alone* is a movie you've got to watch again.

The film is about a kid named Kevin McCallister (Macaulay Culkin) who accidentally gets left behind when his slightly out of touch family heads to Paris for Christmas. Although something to be concerned about, Kevin seems to do just fine without his family, and even enjoys being left home alone. The real conflict comes into play when bumbling burglars Harry and Marv (Joe Pesci and Daniel Stern) decide to hit Kevin's street. Instead of calling the cops or hiding under the bed, Kevin turns his

house into a veritable torture chamber full of booby traps.

For all of you out there that have seen *Home Alone*, you know plausibility isn't its strongest point. The movie also drags a bit in the middle, between the actual set up of the plot and the attempted burgling. Despite this, however, many of us still have a good amount of affection for this holiday classic. No matter how many times you see it, the scene where the criminals get their just desserts always retains its humor. Plus there's the unforgettable cast—Culkin before he grew up and got all funny-looking, Pesci and Stern with their great tongue-in-cheek comedy, and John Candy as the Polka King of the Midwest.

*Home Alone* made \$533 million internationally, earning it the title of highest grossing comedy ever in *The Guinness Book of World Records*. It was followed by three more movies (yes, there's a fourth one). *Home Alone 2: Lost in New York* was a pretty great sequel, but don't waste your time with 3 or 4. None of these, however, can beat the original. Craving some Christmas spirit? Dust it off.