

2002 Grad Writes from Iraq

by Donovan Campbell

Greetings to all of the Montreat College community. My name is SPC Donovan Campbell. I am December 2002 graduate of Montreat. I am also a Chaplain's Assistant in the North Carolina National Guard. Currently, I am deployed to Iraq with the 1/113 Field Artillery, a battalion of the 30 HSB. For the next year my wife, Renee, will be at home in Charlotte raising our daughter, now nine months old, while I serve my time here.

At Montreat, I was very active with *The Whetstone*. They have asked me to try and keep the campus updated with information from the efforts in Iraq.

Our flight landed in Kuwait on March 2, and we spent the next week there preparing for our drive through Iraq.

On March 10 we headed out on what would be a three-day trek across Iraq. Our route of march passed through almost all of the populated areas of Iraq – the only real inhabitable sectors, lying between the rivers.

Being in part of the Old Testament lands excites most of us. The soldiers of this battalion are particularly interested in its biblical and historical

importance. Beyond that, all I can say of Iraq, from what I saw, is that this is a destitute country. One officer explained it as a "fourth-world country."

We saw children with no shoes lining the streets because there was no school for them to go to. We passed men and women, adults, sitting by the road because they had nowhere to go for work. All of them were asking for food and water. Yesterday I visited a large brick "company" – 53 giant kilns with chimneys pouring out thick, black smoke. It was about 50% staffed by children as young as six and seven. Even in the most populated and advanced city, Baghdad, everything was destitute, run down, and pathetic.

The happy ending - this is the reason we are here. Saddam's lengthy reign ruined this country and drove the people deep into poverty. We are now working to help these people get their country headed toward progression. Most of these people want us here. They were cheering as we passed them on the streets. We bring them hope and a future.

That is something that we



Montreat alum, Donovan Campbell (far right), serves communion in Iraq as a Chaplain's Assistant for the North Carolina National Guard.

cannot let the few fanatical fundamentalists stop us from doing. As a soldier, I can tell you that despite the sacrifice we make, our armed forces are glad to be here and ready to help in any way we can.

For my first correspondence, I will leave you with this: Iraq is an open mission field. The residents of our district have been asking for Arabic translations of the Bible. The people of this

country are desperate and ready for outside help, hope, love, and compassion. Islam does not have as strong a hold on these people as it thinks and, with the right kind of missionary intervention, this could one of the ripest mission fields of our generation.

I am open to any questions and comments you may have. We do have some Internet access here; you can e-mail: donovan.j.campbell@us.army.mil. Please

sign your name to any e-mail; I want to know whom I'm talking to. If anyone is interested in writing letters or sending packages, my address is:

ADDRESS:

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Montreat Hosts Southeastern Conference on Christianity and



-Staff Reports

The English and Foreign Languages Department of Montreat College is hosting the Southeastern Region of the Conference on Christianity and Literature on the Montreat campus, April 15-17, 2004. This year's theme is "Suffering and Loss in Literature." The keynote speaker will be Jill Peláez Baumgaertner, Dean of Humanities and Theology at Wheaton College.

With the exception of Friday night's keynote address, all sessions are free for Montreat College students, and will be held in Gaither Fellowship Hall.

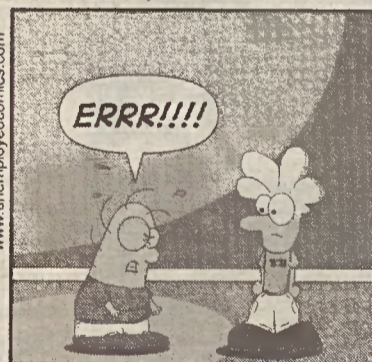
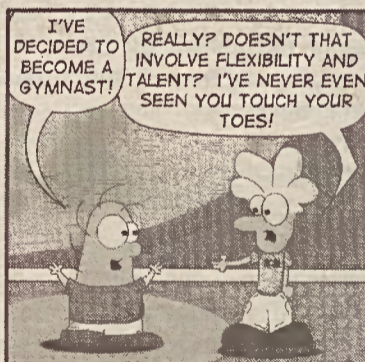
Dr. Rich Gray, Montreat College Professor of English, will serve as moderator for the Cre-

ative Writing Session, Thursday night.

The Conference on Christianity and Literature (CCL) is a national organization interested in the relationship of Christianity and literature and dedicated to both scholarly excellence and collegial exchange. An allied organization of the Modern Language Association, the CCL is active in the annual MLA national convention as well as in seven regional conferences held at rotating sites throughout North America.

For additional information, please contact Dr. Rich Gray, rgray@montreat.edu or visit <http://www.montreat.edu/efl/CCL.pdf> for the PDF version of the brochure.

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Reporter and photographer meeting April 6 @ 6 pm in The Whetstone Office.