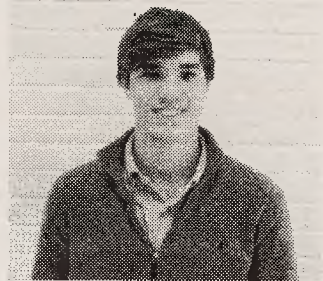




## the high LIFE



"The symbolic start to the holiday season should always happen on Nov. 1 when the holidays jump into full swing."

Mac Ball  
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### News

Israelis and Palestinians continue to struggle over territorial disputes, Syria and Egypt attract serious attention as well.  
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### Opinion

Claims from Darwin in the mid-1800s continue to incite debate today among scientists, religious advocates, educators, and politicians.  
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## As country approaches fiscal cliff, Congress tries to put politics aside

BY LUKE SUMERFORD  
Reporter

With the elections determined, Congress and the President returned to work. Before January 1, President Barack Obama, Speaker of the House John Boehner, and Senate Leader Harry Reid joined together to solve one the worst economic problems the United States has ever encountered: the "Fiscal Cliff."

President George W. Bush and Congress passed in 2003 what was called the "Bush Tax Cuts," which reformed part of the tax code and decreased everyone's taxes. Since then, every time the policy was about to expire, Congress renewed it. While such a decision may not sound harmful, tax cuts, combined with an in-

crease in spending, forced the nation into \$16 trillion in debt.

Obama and Congress tried last year to solve this debt crisis. During the summer of 2011, all they could devise was a bi-partisan Congressional committee whose job was to unite Democrats and Republicans. This committee failed miserably; consequently, automatic spending cuts and tax increases will take effect on January 1, 2013, known as the "fiscal cliff."

Although the economy is improving, it is doing so at a very slow rate. Tax increases will hurt everyone, lower, middle, and upper class. One of the largest increases will be the payroll tax. For the majority of Americans, this raise in taxes will mean a \$400 deduction for individuals and \$800 for a mar-

ried couple from a single paycheck. Increasing taxes, especially on the middle class, will hurt the economy greatly, thus consumers will not spend as much money, causing a lower demand, forcing layoffs and higher unemployment.

Possibly even worse than an increase in taxes is the U.S. government reaching the debt ceiling, or a set borrowing limit. When such circumstances occur, the U.S. federal government can no longer pay all of its bills, so it must decide which bills to pay and which ones to set aside. As a result, the government could shut down completely, and thousands of federal employees would not be paid. While this scenario sounds terrible, it can

easily be prevented; Congress just needs to pass a bill approving the increase in the debt ceiling. Similar situations have occurred eight times since 2001 and four times under the Obama administration. Republicans in Congress oppose this move because they believe it will lead to more spending and more debt; however, if the ceiling is not raised, financial experts claim the stock market could plummet, sending the U.S. into a deep recession.

Currently, the President and the Democrats, as well as the Republicans, are writing bills on which Congress can vote. If Congress does not act before January, the U.S. economy will suffer. Nearly all Americans will feel the financial effects of the upcoming decisions.

## Writers impress at Phoenix Festival

BY MAC BALL  
Editor-in-Chief

English and Creative Writing teacher Jennifer Wilson was pleased to accompany several students to the High Point University Phoenix Literary Festival on November 16. Whirlie writers won many accolades.

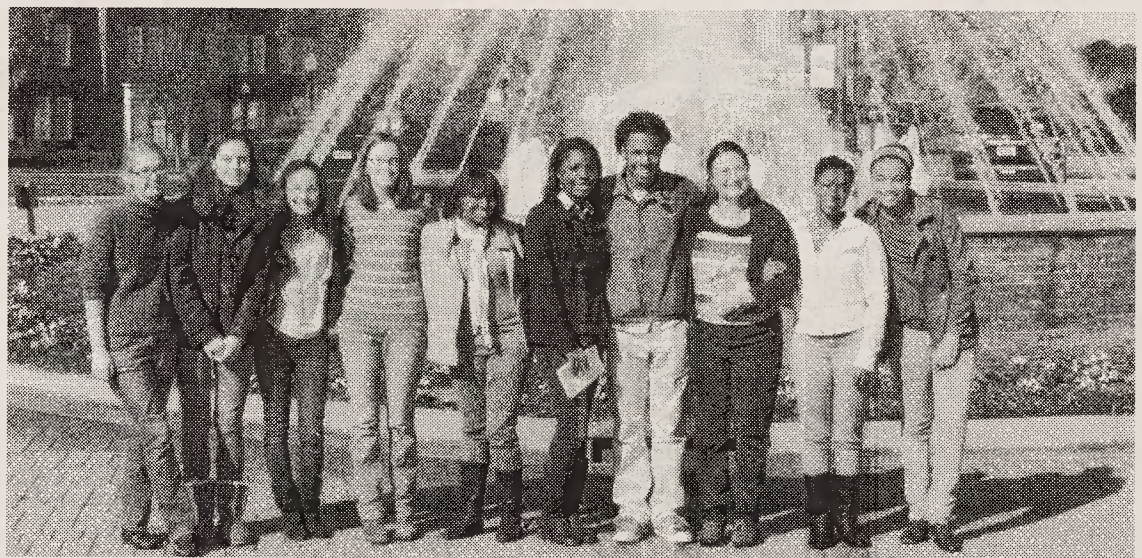
College and high school students' works were judged in three categories: fiction, poetry, and nonfiction. Sophomore girls returned home with seven awards and \$850 for their works.

In the category of fiction, sophomores Caitlyn Councilman won second place for her short story "Lights Out," and Allie Corcoran won an Honorable Mention for "The Way the World Spins."

Councilman's story was a murder mystery involving two sisters escaping a predator.

"The day the lights went out at school, I remember being in Mrs. Wilson's class, and her giving us a journal prompt of what to do if the lights did not come back on," said Councilman, who also earned recognition for her nonfiction piece entitled "An Encounter That Changed My Life."

Inspiration comes from many areas. Some writers draw ideas from their childhood memories, camp experiences, family gatherings, and embarrassing moments, among others. In Councilman's case, her story



Several students participated in a writing contest held at High Point University: Allie Corcoran, Caitlyn Councilman, Natasha Derezinski-Choo, Celia Calhoun, Alda Royal, Kemaya Willis, Aaron Ashby, Mrs. Wilson, Amina Alghali, and Jordan Dixon. Wilson photo

stemmed from the relationship between best friends during a difficult moment in their lives.

"A Tree Grows in Brooklyn was a novel I read that inspired me to write my own short piece," said Corcoran. "I really loved the turn-of-the-century time period and the narration regarding the character Francis."

In poetry, Celia Calhoun won first place with "Forgotten," and Corcoran won second place with "Just Because."

"I was at the beach the week before I wrote the poem, and I suppose that is what inspired me to write 'Forgotten.' The weather was gloomy and rained all day, and that is how I

began my poem," said Calhoun.

In nonfiction, Councilman won first place, Corcoran won second place, and Natasha Derezinski-Choo won an Honorable Mention for her personal narrative entitled "Casting New Chains."

"I think my writing in general has always been about finding closure either for me or for one of my characters," said Derezinski-Choo.

Finally, the last award given to the college or high school writer who shows the most promise all around is called the Tom Walters Award. Allie Corcoran was the recipient and was quite surprised to hear her name announced.

"I was very happy to win but more excited about hearing author Chang-Rae-Lee speak about the many aspects of the writing process," said Corcoran.

Several students from different schools read from their own material. To an audience of professors, published writers, college students, and high school writers, senior Aaron Ashby, junior Amina Alghali, and sophomore Natasha Derezinski-Choo read their works.

"I enjoyed hearing about the writing process of other students and what inspires them, and then I really liked actually hearing them read some of their work," said Derezinski-Choo.