

# NCLR Highlights Humor

By Christine Neff

The 2008 North Carolina Literary Review showcases work by some of the state's best writers on the topic of humor.

It may make you laugh out loud, or tear up in that "laughed-so-hard-I-cried" kind of way.

Margaret D. Bauer, NCLR editor and Rives Chair of Southern literature at East Carolina University, admitted to having both of those reactions while she reviewed material for this year's edition.

And she hopes readers – and listeners to special, supplemental CDs – will share the experience.

"Humor is a popular topic, and we thank these literary critics and the creative writers who responded to our call for contributions, and we know you'll enjoy reading the issue content as much

as you do listening to the CDs," Bauer said.

The journal's 16th issue, titled "North Carolina Humor: The Old Mirth State," is available now. The publication is housed in the ECU English Department and also receives support from the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association.

The 200-page volume includes short stories, essays and poems. Readers also will find reviews of novels and poetry collections, artwork and an interview with the state's poet laureate, Kathryn Stripling Byer.

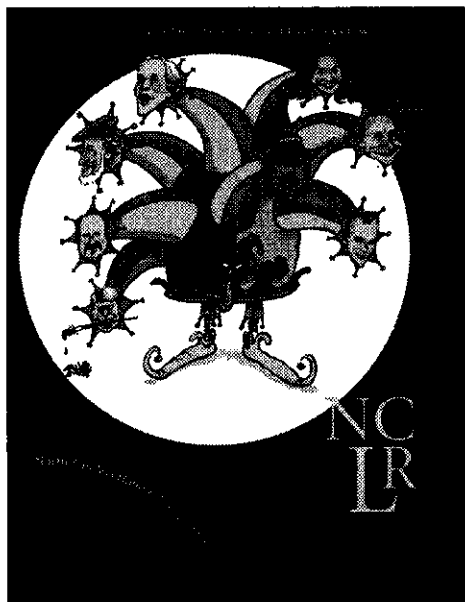
For the first time, the NCLR includes an audio element. Two CDs of "Laugh Tracks" feature authors reading from their short stories, books and essays.

Bauer said the subject of the journal lends itself to audio interpretation. "Hearing the writers read their stories just accents the humor in the pieces," she said.

Included on the CDs are Clyde Edgerton reading from his novel "Lunch at the Piccadilly," Grammy-nominated humorist David Sedaris contributing his essay, "The Ship Shape," and the regional band, Coastal Cohorts, performing their song, "Whose Idea Was This?" Jill McCorkle's short story, "Your Husband is Cheating on Us," which was recorded at ECU in November, is also on the CD.

"Thanks to the generosity of some of our funniest favorites here in North Carolina, all of these wonderful readings and more can be heard on the CDs supplementing this issue," Bauer said.

The CDs come free of charge with the print edition, which are available at bookstores across the state and on the ECU campus at Dowdy Student Stores. The books can be purchased online at <http://www.ecu.edu/nclr>.



The cover of the 2008 NCLR reflects its focus on humor. (Contributed photo)