

March 6, 2008

Bryn Mawr Teams With Main Line School Night To Offer Series of Five Lectures on Cuba

The recent announcement of Cuban president Fidel Castro's retirement has sparked a wave of interest in the island nation and speculation about its future. Bryn Mawr and the surrounding community will have a chance to learn about the history and culture of the United States' largest Caribbean neighbor from five Bryn Mawr scholars in a series of lectures offered as a course by Main Line School Night, the area's largest adult-education program, in March and April.

The lectures, to take place on the Bryn Mawr campus in Room 2 of Dalton Hall, are free to Bryn Mawr students, faculty, and staff. Members of the general public may enroll in the course through [Main Line School Night](#) at a cost of \$19 per lecture or \$85 for the series. The schedule:

- **March 18: From Amsterdam to Havana: The Odyssey of the Linguist Benjamin Spenser, 1699**
Ignacio Gallup Diaz, associate professor and chair, Department of History
By the late 17th century, it was clear that the Spanish empire in the New World could be divided into securely held core regions and vulnerable frontier zones. The Scots tried to found a colony in eastern Panama in the 1690s. Benjamin Spenser signed on as the colony's linguist, and his experiences in Panama and Havana provide a framework through which we can explore the Spanish response to the Scottish threat.
- **March 25: The Road to Happiness: Cuba's Americanization, 1925-2007**
Stephanie Schwartz, Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in the History of Photography
The (very) current debates about the process of Americanization will be seen in the context of one key historical event, the construction of the island's first highway, *La Carretera Central*.
- **Barrios Chinos: Havana and Beyond**
Gary McDonogh, professor, Growth and Structure of Cities Program
Havana's Chinatown was once the largest such enclave in Latin America. The story of its formation and decline in comparison to rivals in Lima, Guayaquil, Panama City, and North American cities offers an important perspective on local histories, regional patterns, and changing meanings of globalization.
- **April 8: The Politics of the Past in Post-Revolutionary Havana**
Matthew Hill, research associate, Bryn Mawr College; lecturer, University of Pennsylvania
Hill will discuss the political uses of the past in post-revolutionary Cuba by examining how the state seeks to rescue the past in the historic city center, Habana Vieja. The state seeks to capitalize on this place, designated as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1982, both economically, through its commodification, and experientially, as an arena for national reenchantment in a period of rapid social change.
- **April 16: Cuba's Struggle for Freedom**
Enrique Sacerio-Garí, Dorothy Nepper Marshall Professor of Hispanic and Hispanic-American Studies and chair of the Spanish Department
Building upon the most recent events on the island, Sacerio-Garí will examine Cuba's cultural and sociopolitical issues and policies in the context of its long struggle to be a free and sovereign nation.

"Social Justice in Math and Science Education" Symposium Features Keynote Speaker Hrabowski

In today's increasingly technological world, math and science literacy is a prerequisite for success in many careers. How can educators help all students succeed in math and science and hence have equal access to the opportunities of our society?

Mathematicians, scientists, students, and educators from around the region will gather at Bryn Mawr to offer their answers to that question on Wednesday, March 19, at a symposium in Thomas Great Hall.

The program opens at 3 p.m. with a panel of Bryn Mawr alumnae who will reflect on the support they were given as students and what that support has meant to their postbaccalaureate experiences. Between 4 and 6 p.m., math and science professors from Philadelphia-area colleges and universities will share information about strategies for enhancing all students' achievements in math and science.

The capstone event of the symposium is a keynote address by University of Maryland, Baltimore County, President Freeman Hrabowski III, the author of *Beating the Odds: Raising Academically Successful African American Males*, and *Overcoming the Odds: Raising Academically Successful African American Young Women*. Hrabowski is known nationwide as a visionary leader in higher education. According to *The Washington Post*, he has "transformed the University of Maryland Baltimore County with his exuberant, forceful character ... and helped lift minority and low-income students, especially black math and science majors, to the highest levels of academic achievement."

One of Hrabowski's many notable accomplishments is the Meyerhoff Scholarship Program, established in 1993, awarded to high-achieving high school seniors who have an interest in pursuing doctoral study in the sciences or engineering, and who are interested in the advancement of minorities in the science. The program has since produced more than 400 graduates, nearly all of whom are pursuing advanced degrees, and 220 more Meyerhoff Scholars are currently at UMBC. According to the National Science Foundation, "The Meyerhoff Scholarship Program has become one of the leading sources of minority students who pursue graduate degrees in the sciences and engineering—and it soon promises to become *the* leading source."

Hrabowski serves as a consultant to the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, and universities and school systems nationally. Two of the numerous corporate and civic boards on which he serves are the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Constellation Energy Group. He has received honorary degrees from eight institutions, including, most recently, Haverford College.

For more information about the symposium, e-mail Professor of Mathematics [Victor Donnay](mailto:vdonnay@brynmawr.edu) (vdonnay@brynmawr.edu).

PEN/Faulkner Award Winner James Salter to Read

Author James Salter, whose collection *Dusk and Other Stories* was awarded the 1988 PEN/Faulkner Award, will be reading his work at Bryn Mawr College's Thomas Great Hall at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 20. The reading is free and open to the public.

A *New York Times* headline once referred to Salter as "The Fighter Pilot Who Aimed for Fiction but Lived on Film." And while it's true that Salter spent 12 years in the military (including

combat in the Korean War as a fighter pilot) and wrote several screenplays—the most successful being the Robert Redford vehicle *Downhill Racer*—it is his passion for the written word for which he clearly hopes to be remembered.

“Two other elements in the life are not careers, exactly, but rather vocations,” wrote the author Samuel Hynes in reviewing Salter’s memoir *Burning the Days*. “One is the desire for the intimate company of women. The other is the desire to write not merely good prose, but the best prose, so perfectly made that it will survive the ends of life’s affairs and the erosions of time.”

In addition to *Dusk and Other Stories* and *Burning the Days*, Salter’s work includes the novels *Solo Faces*, *Light Years*, *A Sport and a Pastime*, *The Arm of Flesh* (revised as *Cassada*), and *The Hunters*, as well as the memoir *Gods of Tin* and the story collection *Last Night*.

Challenging Women's Final Tally: \$232 Million

Members of the Resources staff spent the early days of 2008 busily tapping the keys of their calculators as they counted last-minute gifts to the *Challenging Women* campaign that entered the College’s coffers at the end of December. Last week, President Nancy J. Vickers announced the final total: \$232,072,273.

Vickers announced that the gifts to the campaign had reached the \$225 million goal in early December, but donors contributed more than \$7 million before the end of the year, making December a banner month for College fundraisers.

Vickers noted that the campaign had closed “on a triumphant note.”

“When we announced our minimum goal of \$225 million in October 2002, we all felt that we were setting our sights on a formidable but attainable philanthropic achievement,” Vickers said.

Vickers continued: “The enthusiasm, dedication, and generosity with which alumnae/i, parents, and friends, as well as the campus community, embraced this undertaking were inspirational and critical to its success. I am deeply grateful for the unflagging determination and hard work of Campaign Chair Ruth Kaiser Nelson and her two Vice Chairs Denise Lee Hurley and Catherine Allegra, and for the support of the entire Bryn Mawr community for exceeding the goals of the campaign.”

Saudi Arabia Expert Mai Yamani '79 to Speak

Mai Yamani '79, a leading expert on Saudi Arabia, will return to the College this month to give a talk titled “Initiative and Inertia: Saudi Politics at Home and Abroad.” The lecture will take place at 7:30 p.m. in the Ely Room of Wyndham Alumnae House and is free and open to the public.

“As Saudi Arabia becomes far more active diplomatically in trying to sort out the problems in Iraq, it has become paralyzed domestically,” Yamani has written. Although King Abdullah had a reputation as “a keen advocate of reform” when he ascended to the Saudi throne in 2005, Yamani says, ordinary Saudi citizens who hoped to see the Kingdom make significant steps toward democratic reform have been disappointed, even as Abdullah “has energetically taken on a leading role in the region’s turbulent affairs.”

Yamani, who was the first Saudi woman to earn a doctorate from Oxford, is currently a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. A social anthropologist who has done extensive field research in Saudi Arabia, she is the author of *Changed Identities: The Challenge of the New*

Generation in Saudi Arabia and *Cradle of Islam: The Hijaz and the Quest for an Arabian Identity*, the co-author of *The Rule of Law in the Middle East and the Islamic World: Human Rights and the Judicial Process*, and the editor of *Feminism and Islam: Legal and Literary Perspectives*.

In addition to her scholarly work, Yamani has published commentary in the popular press in the United States, Great Britain, and the Middle East, and her expert opinion is frequently sought by broadcast news programs. A sampling of her commentary can be found at [Project Syndicate](#).

Penn Professor to Lecture on War and Democracy

Does the spread of democracy really lead to international peace? On Tuesday, March 18, Edward Mansfield, the University of Pennsylvania's Hum Rosen Professor of Political Science, will address the question in a talk titled "Electing to Fight: Why Emerging Democracies Go to War." The lecture, hosted by Bryn Mawr's Center for the Social Sciences and the Peace and Conflict Studies Program, will be presented at 4:15 p.m. in Thomas 224; it is free and open to the public.

"Electing to Fight" will draw from a book of the same name co-authored by Mansfield and his colleague Jack Snyder, who argue that emerging democracies with weak political institutions are especially likely to go to war. Drawing on cases from revolutionary France to contemporary Russia, Mansfield demonstrates that political leaders in these democracies attempt to rally political support by invoking external threats and resorting to belligerent, nationalistic rhetoric. Because the risk of conflict in new weak democracies is high until democracy is consolidated, Mansfield and Snyder argue that the best way to promote democracy is to build the institutions that democracy requires—such as the rule of law—before encouraging mass participation and elections.